THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG
OF
POLITICAL TOOLS
AND
GRASS ROOTS ACTIVISM

EDITED BY JAMES DONNELLY

PROPOSAL

PROSPECTUS: THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG OF POLITICAL TOOLS AND GRASS ROOTS ACTIVISM

The American political system, as currently applied, engenders profound and nearly universal popular anger and frustration. At the upper levels of the system, the decisions we are allowed to make, the options we are given, the opinions we are enjoined to hold, and the byzantine nature of the legal process conspire to render us all but powerless.

If the top of the system has been made impregnable, our best hope is to work for change at the bottom of the pile: locally, personally, in human scale. When they work hard enough, and hold on long enough, people win at this game. We have proof.

The Whole Earth Catalog of Political Tools offers the example, experience, and advice of those who have successfully sought systemic change, legal change, cultural change, environmental change. Personal computers and phone/fax technology have fundamentally changed the ways in which private citizens can act to mitigate governmental fecklessness; the **Catalog** shows means by which information — the last great national resource that is not yet a wholly owned subsidiary — can be kept available to the many and free of enhancement by the spin doctors. And it points out dozens of trails through the legislative thicket that surrounds us.

The **Catalog** does not push a political ideology. The notions of Left and Right have been misused to the point that they are almost meaningless; unlikely grassroots alliances seem to show that the stranger the bedfellows, the livelier the action. We present tools of political utility. The reader supplies the motivation.

The material found in the Catalog is short on inspirational bombast and long on usable information that readers can take to the bank — or, better yet, to their congressman's office, a city council meeting, a press conference, or the next convocation of regional power brokers who may not know that they need citizen input.

(All items listed below have appeared in previous issues of *Whole Earth Review*; samples are attached)

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

While much of James Donnelly's life remains shrouded in mystery, a few things are known.

He has been instrumental in the success of two presidential candidates in the last twenty years, despite having been too sick to vote on election day 1980.

He has always taken a boyish delight in the high-spirited nature of American politics. Lately he has been heard to murmur that the political process may, in time, serve as something more than noisy lowbrow entertainment.

His current career at Whole Earth, as designated apologist for an obscure set of editorial policies, has given him an overflowing contextual toolkit with which to dissect the intricacies of citizen activism at its most effective level -- that is, the bottom.

He has never been convicted of a felony. We have double-checked this.

PART ONE:

RIGHT, LEFT & OTHER NOISY ANACHRONISMS

SOCIALISM IN CANADA

HOWARD RHEINGOLD INTERVIEWS JULIE DAVIS AND DAVID AGNEW OF ONTARIO'S NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

You can miss a lot if all you read is the establishment press, especially about what goes on beyond America's borders. Take socialism — first it gets lumped, inaccurately, with communism. Since the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet economy collapsed of its own accord, capitalism is widely seen as triumphant, leaving only a few Cold Warriors wandering around in confusion looking for a new enemy. (It didn't take them long to find one.) But what about countries like Sweden and Denmark, where democratic socialists have on occasion run the governments? Sweden gets dismissed as a country full of people obsessed with suicide, and Denmark as the place that allows kiddie porn.

A democratic socialist party won last year in the Canadian Province of Ontario. It wasn't just a squeaker; the New Democratic Party (NDP) won big. It is even conceivable that they could capture the federal government in a couple more years. If you wonder why — and more importantly how — read on.

Julie Davis is secretary-treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labor. As a member of the NDP, she chaired the election planning process. David Agnew is the principal secretary to Bob Rae, the NDP party leader who is now the Premier of Ontario. —*Richard Nilsen*

HOWARD RHEINGOLD (HR): Could you begin by explaining the New Democratic Party's victory in Ontario last September, in the context of Canada's electoral politics?

JULIE DAVIS (JD): Ontario is the industrial heartland of Canada and has never before elected a democratic socialist government. We've held power in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and briefly in British Columbia. In Ontario, we have a three-party system with the Progressive Conservative Party being the right, the Liberals being center right, and then the New Democratic Party [NDP] being left and center left. It was quite an amazing event not only to elect a democratic socialist government, but to elect one with such an overwhelming majority.

HR: Did the magnitude of the victory surprise you?

DAVID AGNEW (DA): We have a different electoral system, in that with fewer than 50 percent of the votes overall you can win much more than 50 percent of the seats, and that's what happened to us. It was a combination of circumstances that allowed us to win 38 percent of the popular vote across the province, and yet win 73 out of 130 seats.

JD: We had done polling and we were fairly confident going into election day, but when it started to happen it certainly was a big surprise.

HR: What did the NDP do in terms of organizational strategies to make the victory happen?

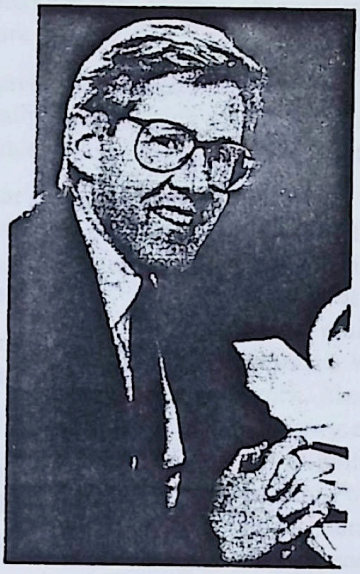
Michael Libby

THE ELEVEN WOMEN cabinet ministers we appointed out of twenty-six positions is a record, not just in this province, but in any part of Canada. And we elected thirty-one women out of the seventy-three seats we won. The proof is in the pudding for women voters, as it is for all voters. If we deliver on the policies that are relevant to them they will reward us or punish us accordingly.

DA: We've always been a party that has organized itself from the grass roots up. We are a party that has very serious policy conventions and democratically elects its candidates locally. When we design election strategy, a small group plans it, but it's on the basis of consultation, and that paper then is approved by the party as a whole. And that's the way we ran this campaign too, with a lot of consultations with the party. Yes, we used modern tools like focus groups and polling. Yes, we advertised, like everybody else does in politics these days. But we make sure that when we're doing serious strategy planning we're

The New Democratic Party's MPPs (Members of the Provincial Parliament) for Ontario. What is most revealing about these politicians is what they did before they were elected. The professions best represented are education and union activity, not law and business. Real estate is often a stepping stone to a career in politics, but in this group, the closest thing to that is several small contractors and a consultant/developer for low-income housing. Multinational corporations are represented in a very interesting way — there is a phone installer from Bell Canada, a truck driver from Rockwell, a maintenance engineer and an assembly-line worker from General Motors, and a Chemical Union vice-president who worked for Shell. Plus several steelworkers, a millwright/mechanic, and a hospital worker.

Twenty-six members of this caucus form the NDP government's cabinet. Eleven of these cabinet members are women, including the director of a battered-women's clinic, a Workers Compensation claims adjudicator, a union negotiator, a psychiatric nurse, and the executive director of Meals on Wheels.



Julien Le Bourdais

As the leader of the New Democratic Party in Ontario, Bob Rae, 42, became Provincial Premier after his party's victory last year. Of the 73 NDP members elected to the legislature, Rae is one of only a handful with a traditional politician's resume — son of a career diplomat; law degree; Rhodes scholar — but he also worked in a legal aid clinic and for the United Steelworkers of America.

very much in touch with the people who are the backbone of the party.

HR: How much of the success would you say was due to organization and how much due to the party's positions on the issues?

JD: It was a combination. Clearly, we were the happy recipients of the backlash against the federal government's policies, and everything that they stood for, so that didn't help the provincial Progressive Conservative Party. We were also the recipients of the unhappiness with what was perceived to be an arrogance on the part of the ruling Liberal Party in Ontario, so we had that going for us as well. But I also think it was the fact that our platform spoke to what was important in people's lives at this particular moment in time, combined with a campaign that was run very smoothly.

HR: It costs enormous amounts of money to run for political office in the United States, which limits who does run. How is campaign financing done in Canada?

DA: Very differently. There are very strict limits.

JD: There are regulations that have been agreed to by all parties about how much money can be spent. It's a formula based on the number of voters in each riding [political district]. On top of that, in the NDP we set limits on the amount of money that can be spent in nomination campaigns. We set a limit of $5,000, so that anybody who wants to be the candidate in a particular riding in a contested nomination can't spend more than $5,000. And if there is a contested nomination, we make the attempt to have at least one of the candidates be someone from one of the target groups, either a visible minority or a woman or a native person or someone who's disabled. We also provide for our target-group candidates a sum of money to help them during the

election process; not a huge sum, but it helps to cover the costs of baby-sitters or, in some cases, it was used to buy clothes and other things like that.

HR: How much did the NDP spend on its Ontario campaign?

JD: The limit that we could spend was just over two million dollars, and we spent just under two million.

HR: Political parties in the United States tend to be boring and unappealing to many people, especially on the local level — it's hard to get people to go to meetings. What things does the NDP do to make the nuts-and-bolts part of electoral politics interesting enough to party members to get them out to meet and out to vote?

JD: We have the same problems in terms of meetings.

DA: We don't think we do enough. Some of the old things we did don't necessarily work as well, especially in large urban centers like Toronto or Ottawa or Hamilton, where you've got all this big-city stuff going on and it's harder and harder to get people to attend meetings in the evenings like they used to do. We try to make sure that people have a serious opportunity to affect the policies of the party.

JD: We have a structure where we bring together our party activists on a quarterly basis. That helps. At those meetings the leader, who's now also the Premier, makes a speech and then the press are asked to leave and we go into a closed-door session and there's a chance for dialogue between those party activists and the leader. People know that our caucus for the most part is morally bound to stay within the broad parameters of party policy. Because they have a real say in how things are run, there tends to be more interest.

HR: Do you have any strategies aimed specifically at countering voter indifference?

DA: I think that's a process of making politics relevant to people, of reducing the cynicism that people feel.

JD: Involvement is the key. The more you can involve people right from the very beginning of the process, the more ownership people are going to take, and the more they're going to want to be involved.

HR: What does the NDP do to attract women voters? Do women play a large role in the party?

JD: In Ontario we have a rule of gender parity within the party. In this election, the party president was a woman, the provincial secretary — which is the elected full-time position that runs the party on a day-to-day basis — was a woman, and I was the chair of the election planning process. We had a lot of visibility. Women are attracted to our party because it seriously addresses the issues that are important to us. We haven't backed away from taking the proper stand on tough issues like abortion. We're pro-choice and have been for many years, and we're out in front on issues like daycare. At party functions we provide childcare.

DA: The eleven women cabinet ministers we appointed out of twenty-six positions is a record, not just in this province, but in any part of Canada. And we elected thirty-one women out of the seventy-three seats we won. The proof is in the pudding for women voters, as it is for all voters. If we deliver on the policies that are relevant to them they will reward us or punish us accordingly.

HR: Is the NDP primarily a party that represents organized labor?

JD: No. It certainly has a large base of support among organized labor, but we also represent the broad multicultural mix that is Ontario. We've done a lot of work, like establishing ethnic advisory committees. We have about half a dozen of them — Italian, Portuguese, Chinese — just to name a few off the top of my head.

HR: What tools or techniques has your party used to increase its membership?

DA: One of the ways that we do that is by getting in touch with the people who voted for us in the last election and setting up appointments with them, doing mail campaigns to them, and seeking their membership.

JD: Direct mail is the easiest, although I'm not sure that it has the same payback. But there's nothing that beats one-on-one contact. Particularly from someone whom the person who's being contacted knows and respects. You can't beat that. The other thing we try to do when we register new members is to sign them on to what we call preauthorized checks. We would rather get a little bit each month and have it coming directly from their bank account than get the same amount of money in a lump sum once a year.

HR: How do you set that up?

JD: The banks will do that in Canada. A person agrees on the amount to be taken out of their account each month and deposited to the Party's account. There

YOU'VE GOT TO FIND OUT what you can say and do that's relevant to the people. By that I don't mean throwing your principles and values out the window and chasing votes, because frankly that catches up. People voted for the NDP because it had a sense of where it wanted to be, had a vision and a coherent set of policies that were relevant to the times.

are forms that you fill out and you send in a sample check and then the banks take care of it.

HR: We hear a lot in the U.S. about the Green Party in Germany, which recently lost all of its seats in the new German Parliament. One of the reasons given for the defeat was that many of the issues first raised by the Greens have been successfully co-opted by the larger parties. Has co-optation of issues been a problem for the NDP?

JD: Ever since we began. But what tends to happen is that the other parties don't co-opt all of an issue. The tendency has been to take enough just to satisfy the lowest common denominator. But it's not working any more. People here are much more cynical about politicians and things like that.

HR: How does a longtime minority party like the NDP avoid seeing itself as a perpetual underdog and having that view become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

JD: Although our caucus was small, we were the official opposition in Ontario going into this election. When you're the official opposition you've only got one place to run for and that's the government. That's what we did — everything from having the leader dress in such a way that he looked like a premier, to running a very professional campaign and having our leader's tour run very professionally and having it work very smoothly, all of which gives the impression of a party that's in control and knows what it's doing, and looks like a winner.

DA: You've got to find out what you can say and do that's relevant to the people. By that I don't mean throwing your principles and values out the window and chasing votes, because frankly that catches up. People voted for the NDP because it had a sense of where it wanted to be, had a vision and a coherent set of policies that were relevant to the times. We are also a break with the past. There was less genetic voting — "I'm voting for a party because my father did and my grandfather did and his grandfather did." People are being more consumer oriented when it comes to voting, and I think that's a very healthy thing.

HR: If you were to give some free advice to U.S. citizens about the system of electoral politics as it is practiced in the United States, what would that be?

JD: You've got to find a way to make political office accessible to more people. You've got to get your arms around the costs. If only the rich and powerful can run for office, then the parties tend to represent only very small groups. That's the biggest task.

HR: How would you propose doing that?

JD: For a start, put controls over the amount of money that can be spent in primaries. Then the parties have got to find ways of assisting those people who have been excluded for so long and help them to attain nomination.

DA: Whether it's Ontario or California or West Germany, don't underestimate the people, their connection to issues and the ways you can make issues relevant to them in their daily lives. ■

PART TWO:

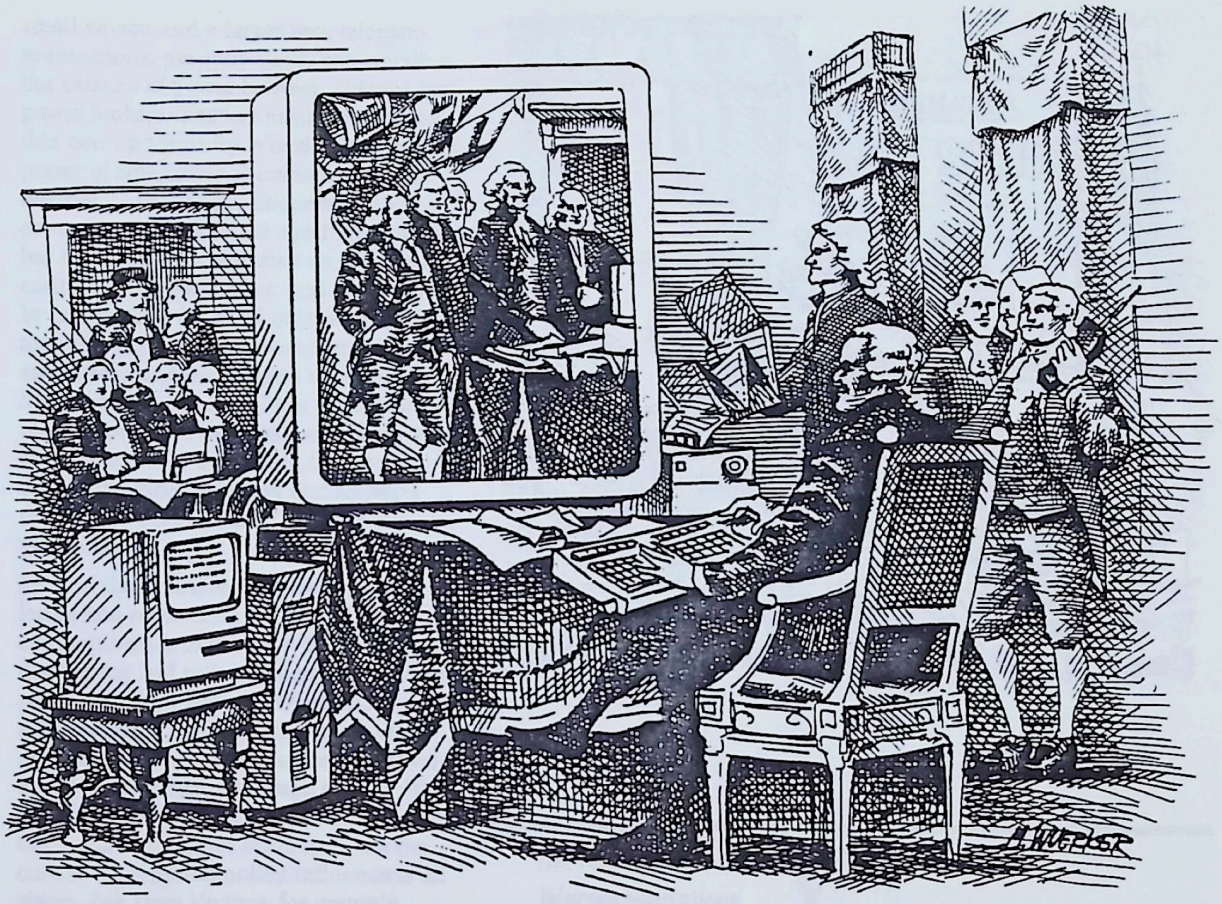
ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY

ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES are about power — how to gain it, influence it, and exercise it in a modern democratic society. Big government, big business, big politics already know how to use telecommunication technologies to amplify their effectiveness. The cost of access to these technologies is no longer an insurmountable barrier to citizens, but the arcane knowledge of how to use these tools to provide leverage for community organizing activities remains an obstacle. The purpose of this article, and those that follow it, is to help demystify electronic mail, computer bulletin-board systems, computer conferencing, and other tools that can help citizens gain some of the communication and persuasion power that has heretofore been limited to large institutions. —HR

A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

—James Madison



The Great Equalizer

by Howard Rheingold

Illustrations by Matt Wuerker

IN THE AGE OF MASS MEDIA, citizens and grassroots groups need an equalizer. The combination of personal computers and the telephone network might prove as important to citizens in the information age as the printing press has been for several centuries. The use of electronic mail services, computer bulletin-board systems, and computer conferencing systems as channels to make decisions and disseminate information can help grassroots political organizations, nonprofit groups, and other public interest groups to gather critical information, organize political action, sway public opinion and guide policy-making.

Just as the advent of the Colt .45 revolver during the taming of the West equalized the balance between a

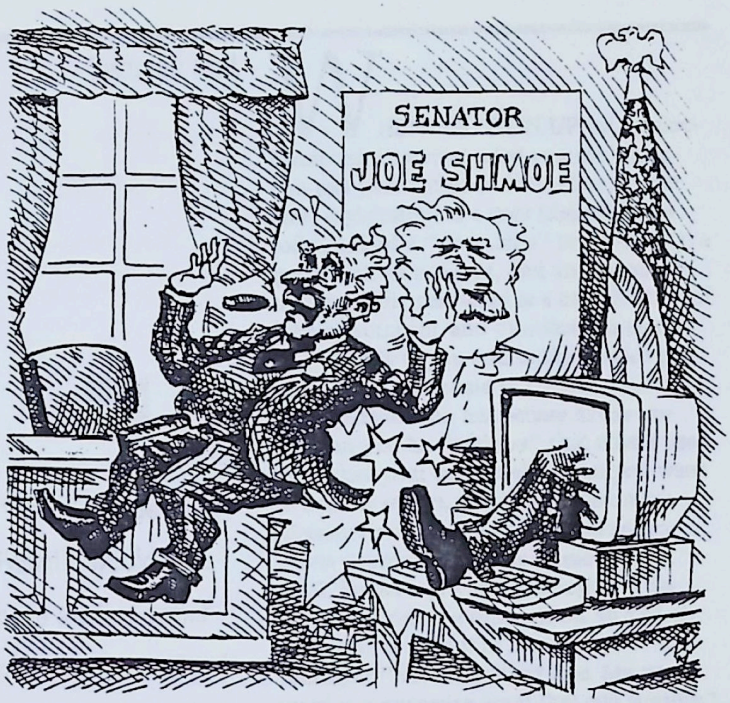
small person and a larger one, telecommunications, properly used, can equalize the balance of power between citizens and power brokers. The key to understanding this new opportunity is understanding the power of *computers as communication devices.* Many people understand that computers are no longer confined to number crunching for scientists or data processing for big businesses, and can be used by non-experts for word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheet forecasting, and other mind-amplifying activities. Many people, however, have yet to realize that the power of personal computers can be multiplied by equipping them with communication hardware and software that allow them to "talk" over the telephone lines.

Most of the processes involved in formulating and advocating public policy are communicative in nature — meeting others, developing and refining ideas, persuading people to adopt your views, enlisting their support, negotiating compromises with opponents. These functions can all be enhanced significantly through the use of computer-mediated communications. And these communicative techniques are the core of what public policy influence is all about. Ask Dave Hughes, for example.

Dave Hughes is a pamphleteer and activist who uses a laptop computer and a modem in place of a printing press. Hughes, a retired West Point instructor and combat veteran of Korea and Vietnam, now uses a computer bulletin board system in Colorado Springs to mobilize action in local political matters.

"Electronic citizenship means freedom of electronic expression," Hughes claims. "I think that Benjamin Franklin would have been the first owner of a microcomputer. I think that the Declaration of Independence would have been written on a word processor. And I think that Tom Paine would have made *Common Sense* available on an electronic bulletin board."

The rest of this article explains how telecommunication technologies work and points to resources and references that can help you start using these tools. The articles that follow, contributed by a variety of organizations and organizers, will show you how people are using these tools today to amplify their ability to change the world.



The Fundamentals of Telecommunications

YOU NEED FOUR KEY PIECES of hardware to get started: a computer, a communications card in your computer that enables you to use it as a communication device, a modem that converts your computer's output into a form that can be transmitted over telephone lines (and reconverts it from the audible signals that travel over telephone lines into a form that your computer can use), and a telephone. A good introductory book on telecommunications, such as those listed in the bibliography to this article, can tell you how to locate, set up, and operate the hardware. A very basic computer that can be used as a telecommunication terminal can be obtained for a few hundred dollars (less than $100 in some instances). A more powerful computer that can serve multiple needs for an organization can be obtained for $1,000 or less. The price of modems has dropped dramatically and will continue to drop. You should be able to find one for less than $100.

Telecommunication software and telecommunication services are the other components you will need. The most basic form of telecommunication software enables you to type commands on the keyboard of

your personal computer and send those commands through the telecommunication network to a remote service such as a computerized bulletin board system (BBS), electronic mail service, or conferencing system. Very inexpensive (or even free) forms of telecommunication software, known as "shareware," are available; this inexpensive or free software is often remarkably useful, especially for getting started. For less than $100, very sophisticated commercial telecommunication software is available.

When you have your hardware and software working, you need to know the telephone numbers of services that can connect you with other people. The cheapest way to start is by using local BBSs, most of which are free. You can look in the classified advertising section of any controlled-circulation computer newspaper and find lists of dozens, if not hundreds, of such "boards." Almost every BBS has an online list of other BBSs. You can perfect your online skills, meet people, gain information, at very little cost. If you want to send electronic mail to a large number of people in a larger geographical area, you will need a subscription to MCI Mail, Compuserve, PeaceNet, EcoNet, the WELL, or other computer conferencing or e-mail (electronic mail) systems that interconnect with other networks. Because my electronic home, the WELL, has connections with Internet systems, as well as MCI and Compuserve, I can reach and be reached by millions of people worldwide. Costs for each of these systems vary (see the access information at the end of this article).

The missing element is support. Once you have your technology working and your service subscription, you need to figure out how to use it effectively. Fortunately, every system worth its salt offers online support and telephone numbers for access to people who can talk you through the procedures. Indeed, figuring out how to use telecommunication technology by questioning knowledgeable people is one of the best uses of telecommunication technology (see the article about CompuMentor on page 14).

Until you spend some time exploring these new communication media, terms can be confusing. The following sections explain how electronic mail, BBSs, and conferencing systems work, and briefly outline the advantages to using these media.

Electronic Mail

"I think that Benjamin Franklin would have been the first owner of a microcomputer. I think that the Declaration of Independence would have been written on a word processor. And I think that Tom Paine would have made *Common Sense* available on an electronic bulletin board."

WHEN YOU SIGN UP for an electronic mail service, what you get when you pay your entrance fee and/or fill out your registration is a user identification (often called a "username" or "userid"), a password, an account, and an electronic mailbox. The password is a combination of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks known only to you and to the service provider. Your username is known to every other person who has access to the service, and is the "address" that others use to contact you; conversely, when you want to contact others, you look in an online directory and send e-mail to the appropriate username. My username on MCI Mail, for example, is "hrheingold." So when you create a message on MCI Mail, and want to send it to me, you type "h-rheingold" on the subject line. My password is a nonsense word that you wouldn't guess unless I told you. Because you are the only person who knows your password, you are the only person who uses your account, so you are responsible for paying the charges that accrue due to the number of messages or the amount of online time used by that account.

When you want to check your e-mail or send e-mail, you use your telecommunication software to dial the number provided by the service. When your modem connects with one of the service's modems, you see a "prompt" on your computer screen that asks you to enter your username. After you type your username on your computer keyboard, you are prompted to enter your password. The service's computer checks your username against the password, and if they match, you are permitted to send and receive electronic mail. If there is mail waiting for you, a message usually appears on your screen.

An electronic mailbox is a portion of the service's computer memory that is dedicated to your use. If somebody sends you e-mail, their message will be stored there until you read it. If you check your e-mail a few minutes after the message is sent to you, it is available. If you check your e-mail a few weeks or months after it is sent to you, it is available. When you read your e-mail, you can print it on your desktop printer, store it in the service's longterm storage (which is different from your e-mailbox), store it as a computer file on your desktop computer, and/or reply. ►

Electronic mail has several distinct advantages over other forms of communication. Like the telephone, and unlike "snailmail" (as e-mail users refer to postal delivery), delivery is instant; at most, it takes a few minutes for the service to deliver your mail to the e-mailbox of the recipient. Unlike using the telephone, the recipient doesn't have to be online at the moment you want to communicate. This "asynchronous communication" aspect of e-mail eliminates telephone tag. Response is easy and immediate: instead of composing a reply, printing it, putting it in an envelope, and delivering it to a post office or mailbox, you simply type your reply on your computer keyboard.

The cost of e-mail is an advantage that increases in importance as the cost of snailmail and the more expensive delivery services — all of which are linked to energy costs related to moving physical objects around the planet — increase. E-mail services charge between ten cents and two dollars for messages up to 500 characters. Many services charge by the length of your message, others charge by the amount of time you are online; when you are charged for online time, you can compose your messages offline with a word processor, then "upload" them online very quickly. Another cost- and time-saving feature is the capability of sending your message to multiple addresses or even to a mass-mailing list. Some services offer substantial discounts for volume mail, and some services enable you to use your electronic account to send fax and paper-mail for an additional fee.

Electronic mail can give small organizations big leverage. For one example of this kind of leverage, see the article on page 39 about Earthtrust, an environmental-action organization that uses electronic mail to link remote monitoring stations all around the world.

If you want to sell a bicycle, find out the cheapest way to fly to Saskatchewan, argue about politics, or learn about telecommunications, you can "log on" to a BBS, read what others have written in the public communication area, and add your own comments.

Electronic Bulletin-Board Systems

A BULLETIN-BOARD SYSTEM is a large (or small) computer, with one or more modems and telephone lines connected to it, and software that allows people with computers and modems to call and leave messages. As with electronic mail services, you can send and receive e-mail on almost every BBS system. Unlike services that are devoted strictly to delivering e-mail, a BBS is literally an electronic bulletin board where people can post notices and participate in public discussions. If you want to sell a bicycle, find out the cheapest way to fly to Saskatchewan, argue about politics, or learn about telecommunications, you can "log on" to a BBS, read what others have written in the public communication area, and add your own comments. It's amazing how apprehensive one can be about typing words on a keyboard in the security of one's home, knowing that those words are going to be stored in a computer on the other side of town or the other side of the world, to be read by complete strangers. And it's amazing how exciting it can be when you log on again a few hours or a couple days later and find welcoming letters in your e-mailbox and replies to your public comments. Many people find it to be a particularly addictive form of communication; many people, and I include myself, have formed deep friendships and have participated in true community-building through a BBS system located in somebody's home.

Tens of thousands of BBSs are in operation in North America alone, most of them in people's homes, most of them single-line operations (which means that only one person can access the BBS at a time), many of them devoted to a specific area of interest (paganism or Christianity, politics of the left or right, skateboards or science fiction, computer games or ecology). BBSing has created a full-fledged subculture, with national conventions, paper publications, and local social events, all organized online. Most BBSs are free, some of them charge users. There are even global networks of BBSs.

BBSs have the communication advantages of e-mail, plus a few of their own. First, a BBS makes "many-to-many" communication possible, just the way a bulletin board in the town square does — except you can visit the town square by typing a command on your computer at home or the office, and the "town" can consist of a small city, a state, or an entire country. The topic-oriented structure of a BBS system, the capability of "branching" discussions when they begin to drift from the original topic, the capability of using both public and private messages to build communities, the capability of "downloading" software (including software to run your own BBS — a self-propagating characteristic of this medium), the fact that communication style rather than physical appearance counts,

are all powerful advantages of BBSs and computer conferencing systems that I will discuss at greater length below. BBSs, when used knowledgeably, also can be superb tools for grassroots political organizing, or for leveraging the activities of any grassroots public interest or nonprofit organization.

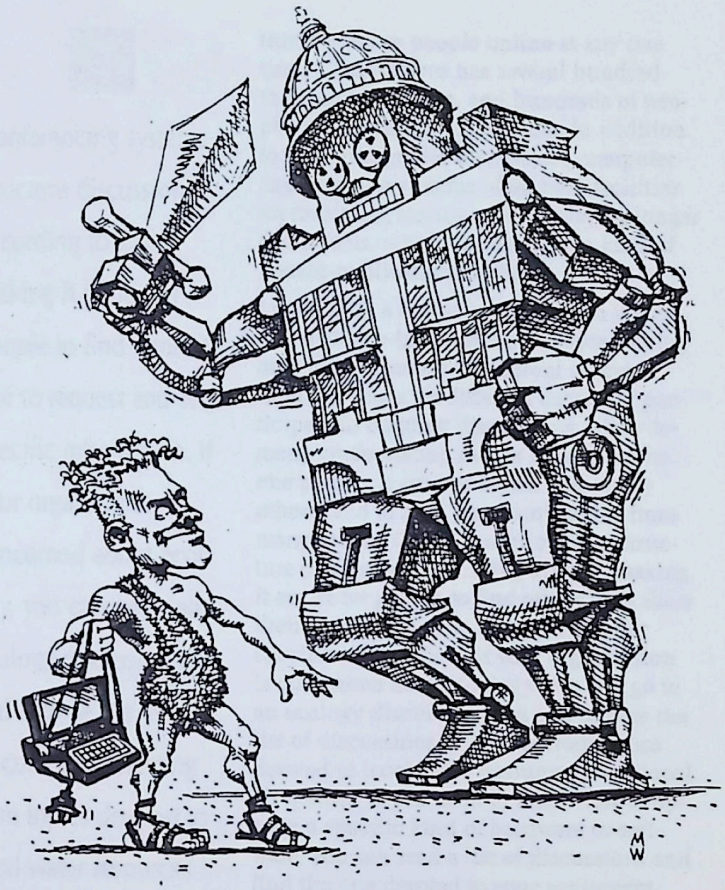
Dave Hughes figured out how to use a BBS to exert political leverage on local government. Ask anybody in Colorado Springs, where Hughes made his first foray into electronic democracy because he wanted to find a way of letting local vendors, who had been shut out of bidding on the county computer contract, air their complaints. The press logged on, asked questions online, and confronted the county commissioners with the complaints and the facts they had compiled.

"It got so hot that county staff members were observed reading from BBS printouts at the podium during formal meetings," Hughes recalls. "In the end," he adds, "the commissioners knuckled under, went to bid, the whole inefficient and incestuous system was exposed, and today there is a whole new approach to information management in the county. The key was that members of the press, who knew that something was wrong but lacked the technical expertise to ask the right questions, were able to use my BBS to meet, efficiently, with a wide range of experts, and thus tackle a difficult form of investigative journalism."

For his next foray into BBS politics, Hughes invited a candidate for city council to post his views on Hughes' BBS, and to respond to questions from voters. The candidate was elected, and the councilman continues to use the BBS to communicate with his constituents.

Hughes is a believer in "teleports" — communities like his own, where people can enjoy a small-town atmosphere and work from their homes using computers and modems. When the Colorado Springs city council looked like it was going to make a decision that would effectively prohibit telecommuting, Hughes went into action.

"The city planners of Colorado Springs decided to tighten the ordinance that regulates working out of the home," Hughes recalls. "Their proposal would not only have made home entrepreneurship suffer, it would have flown in the face of high technology, as an increasing number of people use computer tools at home to earn



money. I was the only person to stand up in front of the planning commission and testify against the ordinance; the planners tabled the matter for thirty days. I then brought the text of the ordinance home with me and put it on my BBS."

Hughes sent letters to the editors of his two local papers, inviting people to log onto his BBS and read the ordinance. Two hundred and fifty callers above the normal traffic level for his BBS called within the next ten days. What Hughes did not realize at the time was that many of those callers worked in large high-tech plants, and they downloaded, printed, copied, and circulated hundreds of copies of the ordinance throughout the city. At the next city council meeting, more than 175 citizens, representing every part of the political and social spectrum of Colorado Springs, showed up to protest the ordinance. It was defeated. Hughes points out that "Ordinarily, the effort needed to get involved with local politics is enormous. But the economy of effort that computers provided made

it possible for me to mobilize opinion and action."

Never one to rest on his laurels, Hughes prodded Colorado Springs to create a City Council Telecommunications Policy Advisory Committee, which does its business on the city's new BBS; the committee is proposing recommendations on how to make elected officials publicly accessible online. Penrose Public Library in Colorado Springs, working with the city, now has "City Hall Online," which includes all announcements, agendas, and minutes of meetings. Then Hughes decided to see what he could do for candidates on a county-wide scale: "I used my personal computer to log onto the county clerk's computer and download the entire registration list of all the voters in my precinct. Now anyone can dial me and go into the world's first political precinct BBS." Next, he told his local branch of the Democratic party that he could put 100 percent of the voters in every one of the 120 precincts of the county on a public BBS. The cost would be nominal, considering the fact that his county normally charges $800 to print out the list. The Colorado State Legislature is implementing a modem dial-up service for legislative information. Last I heard of Dave, he was up in Montana, helping his friends Frank and Reggie Odasz set up the Big Sky Telegraph (see article on page 32). On the WELL, we often see the conversations that Dave has "ported" from BBS systems in China, Estonia, and Saudi Arabia. He might be a grassroots organizer, but he understands that he is dealing with a medium that has global reach as well as local leverage.

Conferencing systems structure discussions according to topic, making it easier for people to find interests, and to request and offer specific information. If your organization is concerned about ecology, you can go to an ecology discussion area and browse the list of discussions, selecting from topics devoted to local water resources or national air quality.

Computer Conferencing

A COMPUTER CONFERENCING system is a more capable and powerful version of a BBS, but the principles are very similar. The central computer for a conferencing system is more powerful, and the software it uses more sophisticated, than the kind used by most BBS systems, and it is usually capable of communicating with several (or several hundred) telephone lines at the same time. The central computer stores, structures, and displays public discourse and handles private electronic mail among groups of people that number from a few hundred to several hundred thousand. The WELL, for example, has about 5,000 members, and there are usually thirty or more people online at any one time. CompuServe has several hundred thousand members, and hundreds of people can be online at one time. In addition to mail and public discussion, computer conferencing systems often have facilities for receiving, storing, and displaying longer documents, which makes them a kind of instant-publication medium.

Like a BBS, a conferencing system is time- and distance-independent. People can log onto the system from different places at different times on different dates and participate in ongoing discussions. Many-to-many conferencing makes it possible for one person to communicate with many others, and to read communications from many others. Conferencing systems structure discussions according to topic, making it easier for people to find others who share their interests, and to request and offer specific information. If your organization is concerned about ecology, you can go to an ecology discussion area and browse the list of discussions, selecting from topics devoted to local water resources or national air quality. If you need to know how to operate a specific kind of hardware or software, you can read a list of discussions and find the one devoted to your equipment.

By organizing information this way, it is possible for networks of people to serve as informal support systems for one another. If I need help figuring out how to use a new kind of software, or want the titles of books about a field that attracts my interest, I can log onto a conferencing system, look for the appropriate topic, and post a query. Then I can log off, go about my business, and when I check back an hour or a day later, I often find that somebody I've never met has answered my question. A conferencing system that includes a broad base of members with a wide variety of expertise is a "living database" in which everyone can serve as a librarian and consultant for everyone else.

The combination of time- and distance-independence, many-to-many capabilities, and topic orientation makes computer conferencing attractive as a medium for conducting ongoing or time-limited "electronic meetings" (see the article on page 18 about an international health-care organization that has been using computer conferencing for this purpose since 1983). Meetings are the bane of most organizations — think of the time and effort required to get a group of people in the same place at

the same time, and think of the quality of work that is done when people are watching a clock. Although there is no substitute for face-to-face encounters when people need to get to know one another or engage in debates that might require minute-to-minute diplomacy, online meetings have several virtues: people can attend meetings at their leisure, from a place of their choosing, with ample time to ponder what they want to say. Any organization can benefit from the proper use of electronic meetings.

Decentralized work, involving volunteers or paid staff scattered around the county or country, is facilitated at low cost by appropriate use of computer conferencing. Coordination of political or lobbying activities in a timely manner also can be facilitated (see the article about PeaceNet and EcoNet on page 20). Specific organizational goals, such as fundraising management, constituent or client communications, political reconnaissance, strategy planning, crisis management, technical support, can be leveraged by knowledgeable use of computer conferencing services. Computer conferencing is not a panacea, but it can be a powerful tool; the key, as with any tool, is to learn how best to use it — and when not to use it.

The powerful computers that run conferencing systems, and the attendant software, are expensive enough right now to be out of reach of most small organizations (although these costs are dropping steadily, which means the situation will change in a few years), so it is usually necessary to subscribe to a service that charges by the month or the hour. The listing at right gives examples of a few such services.

With the power of computer-mediated communications, it is possible to expand dialogue, to show people that individuals can be effective, and to organize groups of strangers into communities. There are few more important tasks at every level, from the neighborhood to the planet, in the days ahead. □

Resources

Books:

Alfred Glossbrenner, *The Complete Handbook of Personal Computer Communications: Everything You Need to Go Online With the World* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1985).

Alan Green, *Communicating in the '80s* (The Benton Foundation, 1776 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20005).

Mary Gardiner Jones and Nancy Chasen, *The Potential of Telecommunications for Nonprofit Organizations* (Consumer Interest Research Institute, 1631 Suter's Lane, Washington, DC 20007).

Amalio Madueno, *Computers for Neighborhoods* (The Community Information Exchange, 1120 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20005).

Samuel A. Simon and Michael J. Whelan, *Phonewriting: A Consumer's Guide to the New World of Electronic Information Services* (Telecommunications Research and Action Center, Box 12038, Washington, DC 20005).

Electronic Mail Systems:

MCI Mail (e-mail, fax, telex) 1111 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; 800/444-6245. Annual fee: $35. Electronic mail: 45 cents for 500 characters; 75 cents, 501-2500 characters; $1, 2501 to 7500 characters; $1 each additional 7500 characters. Telex: per minute of transmission. Fax: 50 cents first 1/2 page; 30 cents each additional 1/2 page.

Computer Conferencing Systems:

CompuServe Information Service (conferencing and e-mail) — Customer Service Ordering Department, Attn.: Operator 281, Box L-477, Columbus, OH 43260; 800/848-8199. Membership: $39.95 plus $3 shipping/handling; specify computer. $12.50/hour; 21 cents/minute. $2/month support fee after 2nd month.

Echo (East Coast Hang-Out) (conferencing and e-mail) — 97 Perry Street/Suite 13, New York, NY 10014; 212/255-3839 (voice), 212/989-8411 (data). $18.95/month unlimited use ($9.95 for students and seniors).

The Meta Network (conferencing and e-mail) — Metasystems Design Group, Inc., 2000 N. 15th Street/Suite 103, Arlington, VA 22201; 703/243-6622 (voice), 703/841-9798 (fax). $15 setup fee; $20/month.

Portal System (conferencing and e-mail) — 10385 Cherrytree Lane, Cupertino, CA 95014; 408/973-9111. Menu interface service: $19.95 membership; $10/month, unlimited use. UUCP connection service: $34.95/month; $1.95/hour connect; unlimited support offered at $95/month.

The WELL (conferencing and e-mail) — 27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA 94965; 415/332-4335 (voice), 415/332-6106 (modem). Membership: free to credit-card customers, $25 otherwise. Monthly fee: $10; use fees $2/hour, billed by the minute. ■

Electronic City Hall

by Michele Wittig

illustration by Brad Hamann

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN "CITY HALL" allows citizens to communicate with each other, city staff, and city officials on an electronic bulletin board from home, office, and public terminals? Santa Monica, California, residents have been answering that question with their Public Electronic Network (PEN), now in its third year of operation. The stated intention of city officials who agreed to this experiment in electronic democracy was to broaden citizen participation in political and community life. Whether this increased participation will be allowed to influence city policies is about to be seen, as PEN faces its first major test.

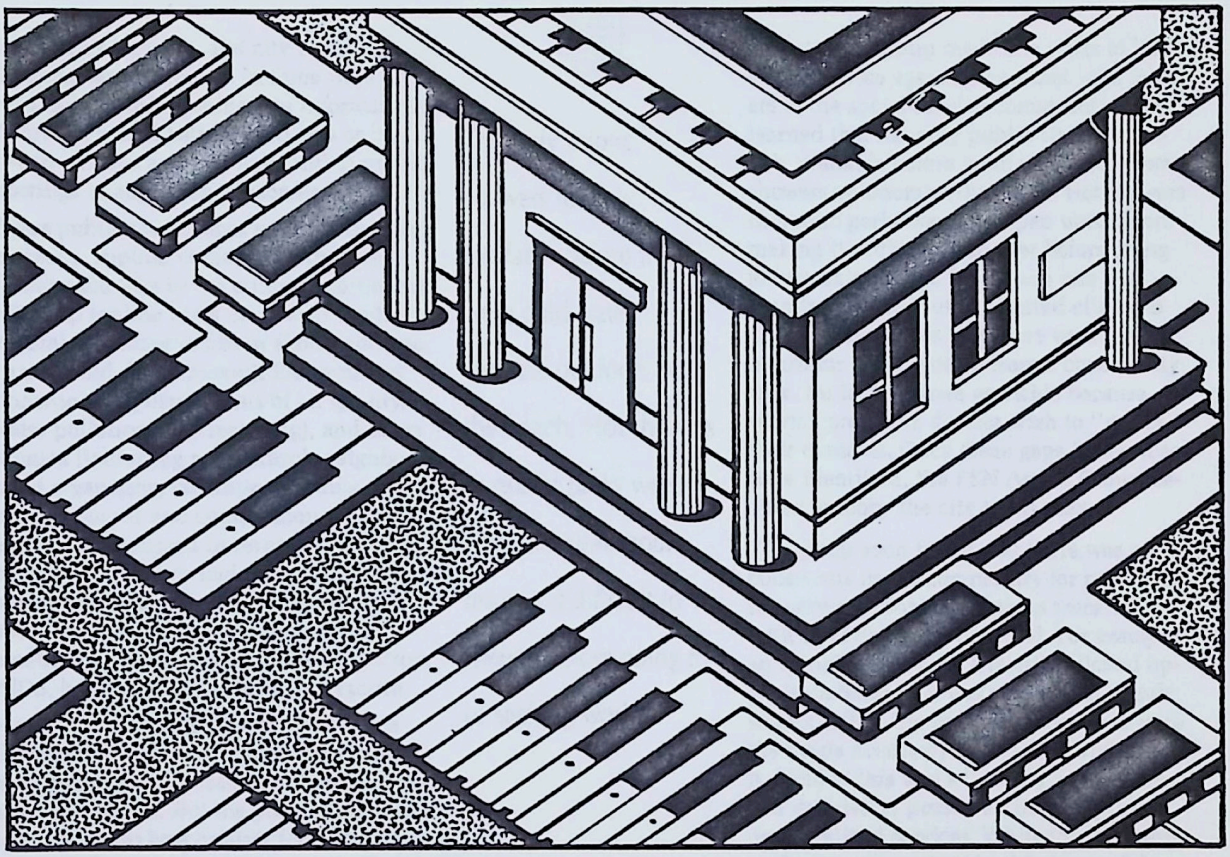
Lisa Carlson is the Janey Appleseed of computer conferencing. I realized how ubiquitous she is when I visited a town in Japan, an hour's flight from Tokyo, logged onto the English-language section of the local conferencing system, and found Lisa there. She works for Metasystems Design Group, which has set up conferencing systems all over the world. One of Metasystems' clients, the City of Santa Monica, set up an "electronic city hall," and Lisa pointed me toward this article.

Michele Wittig is past chair of the People's Electronic Network Action Group, co-chairs the SHWASHLOCK project, and chairs the Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women. She teaches graduate research methods and statistics in psychology at California State University, Northridge. —HR

In the summer of 1989, the Santa Monica City Council was presented with the first proposal from residents who participate in the network. The citizens dubbed their proposal SHWASHLOCK, an acronym for a program to provide early-morning showers, laundromat tokens, and lockers to homeless residents, along with a job bank.

The development of this proposal has elicited intense interest among city officials, the chamber of commerce, and neighborhood associations. The PEN Action Group's proposal addresses what a Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce survey deemed "the city's number-one problem."

For those interested in the uses of teleconferencing, the Action Group provides a case study of community organizing. Unlike electronic conferencing among employees in government agencies, universities, or companies, or among hobbyists who join commercial bulletin boards to gain access



to those with shared interests, PEN has made its debut as a means of communication among people having no more in common than that they live in the same eight-square-mile patch of suburban Los Angeles County.

Political Background

Residents of this city, 80 percent of whom are renters, made political news in the early 1980s when they passed one of the toughest rent-control ordinances in the country. The renters'-rights movement also ushered in a city council that espouses the principle of broadening the base of citizens who can influence city hall decisions. Putting that principle into practice has been difficult.

The PEOPLE's electronic network (a nickname which appeals to graying political activists who settled here in the sixties) constitutes a kind of test of the forms of participation that city staff and elected officials will allow ordinary citizens who participate in the network. Will citizen participation be limited to the recommendation phases of the political process, or will it encompass setting priorities and implementing policy?

For those interested in the uses of teleconferencing, the Action Group provides a case study of community organizing.

Homelessness provides the issue for this test. During the past decade, the homeless population has become more numerous and more visible. Hundreds line up each afternoon to receive a free dinner. The city attorney, meanwhile, has been criticized for his leniency in prosecuting panhandlers and transients who sleep in the parks.

The Network as a Tool for Community Organizing

Intrigued by the possibility of increasing citizen participation in civic life, the city launched PEN in February, 1989, by distributing free user accounts to residents who register with the city. These accounts can be used from one's home or work terminal, or from one of dozens of public terminals

in libraries, schools, and city buildings. Citizens can participate in three ways: 1) read-only boards posting city information; 2) private e-mail between citizens or between citizens and city hall, and 3) public postings in any of six teleconferences.

These public conferences span a wide range of issues. Popular conferences include Crimewatch (run by the police department), PENhelp (online hints on how to use the system), Planning (a forum about land use, zoning, and development), Environment (incorporating discussions of air quality, water pollution, and recycling), and Santa Monica (including rent control, neighborhood organizing, community events, and news of boards and commissions). Social issues are discussed in several additional conferences. Topics include nuclear weapons, drinking and driving, the media, abortion, gun control, foreign policy, health, intergroup relations, Jewish culture, AIDS, human rights, sexism, and racism.

Most PENners seem to be content to use the system to inform themselves or others, or to debate current issues without taking any other action. But the potential of this local system to be a catalyst for political action is illustrated by those users who organized the PEN Action Group in July, 1989. When this group began to meet face-to-face as well as online to consider possible community projects, it was soon decided that the issue of major concern to most was homelessness.

Members of the PEN Action Group communicate with each other in two major ways: online in the Homeless teleconference (in which hundreds of citizens have posted thousands of responses) and in person at monthly meetings. Several homeless PENners are among the two dozen residents who regularly participate in the face-to-face meetings.

SHWASHLOCK

One evening in August, 1989, Santa Monica artist Bruria Finkel posted an idea for closing the gap in existing services for the homeless. She called her idea SHWASHLOCK. Conversations with homeless residents online verified that an early-morning shower, clean clothes, and a place to store one's belongings are essential if the homeless are to get, and keep, jobs.

To educate themselves, members of the PEN Action Group made site visits to local social-service agencies and met with leaders of the social-service community. They learned that the only public showers reliably available before noon were cold-water showers outdoors on the beach. Hot showers in public parks were not open until noon, making it difficult to shower before going to or seeking work. There was one free laundry service, but it required clients to give up the clothes they were wearing in return for clean clothes from a community rack. No lockers were available because service providers did not wish to "police" their contents. Once these gaps in services were identified, the PEN Action Group decided to lobby the city to fill them.

The only public showers reliably available before noon were cold-water showers outdoors on the beach. Hot showers in public parks were not open until noon, making it difficult to shower before going to or seeking work.

The group soon found that there was no consensus in the community for providing the services. Some objections were dealt with by revising the proposal. For example, an initial location for a facility elicited opposition because it was adjacent to a high school. When the group was unable to raise the funds necessary to lease the building, it decided this was a blessing in disguise and decided to pursue an interim plan of decentralized services. While the long-term goal of the group is to build or remodel a center in which these services are integrated with a job bank, the group decided that, in the interim, existing facilities should be adapted and made more accessible.

Another stumbling block arose when the local coalition of social-service providers expressed unease over the threat that the new group would be competing with them for scarce social-service dollars. To allay this fear, the group decided not to seek funding for itself, but to raise funds for an existing social-service agency, which agreed to administer the laundromat voucher program. Other objections were debated vigorously online, but did not result in changes in the original conception. For example, the group persisted in its resolve that the homeless should not be required to show evidence of job-seeking in order to qualify for a shower, laundry voucher, or locker.

Although over $5,000 in private funds has been raised to initiate a laundry voucher system which will pay for 4,000 loads of laundry, so far only one laundromat is participating in the program. Nevertheless, its owners are enthusiastic and have expanded the hours during which vouchers are accepted from homeless clients, who obtain them at a local social-service agency.

A breakthrough occurred when a city council member put the group in touch with a locker manufacturer, who agreed to donate 30 lockers to the city, free of charge, for a seven-month trial period.

In May, 1990, the PEN Action Group's ten-page proposal was formally presented to the city council, resulting in a feasibility study. The following month, the council allocated $150,000 to install lockers and showers at the restroom facilities under the Santa Monica Pier. The city has also agreed to open other public showers at six a.m.

The homeless themselves have emphasized the need for a cooperative job bank, listing employers who are willing to hire the homeless and provide them with bus fare, lunch money, daily or weekly pay, etc. The network will be used to solicit and post job listings, for perusal by anyone on the system. A homeless drop-in center staffed by job counselors has been equipped with a PEN terminal for this purpose. Two local graduate students have earned course credit for soliciting job listings from local businesspeople, interviewing job applicants, monitoring the job-placement effort, and evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

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KIDS-91: A Global Electronic "Hole in Space"

With the SHWASHLOCK project under way, the PEN Action Group began to consider developing a second project. Criteria included use of the network, attracting new and different online participation, and community service. Kevin McKeown, a member of the Electronic Networking Association, suggested that Santa Monica become a participant in KIDS-91, an international effort begun in Norway to enroll schoolchildren, ages 10 to 15, around the world in electronic communication. The proposal was greeted with enthusiasm online and in the PEN Action Group's monthly face-to-face meeting at the city library. Coincidentally, PEN users and staff had been enrolling local schools on PEN. By the time KIDS-91 was proposed, a dozen classes at several public schools had been connected to PEN, each with its own school-based conference. With the advent of KIDS-91, more teachers are signing their students onto the system, so that the children's postings can be transmitted by McKeown to other KIDS-91 groups in Eastern and Western Europe, the Soviet Union, Japan, and North and South America.

On May 12, an electronic "hole in space" transmitted images of the children on the network from a dozen sites around the globe to and from the children at the other sites, on large screens. The city council, school district, and arts commission endorsed the project and committed funding and staff time to make it a success.

Group Process

Because some of the PEN Action Group's decision-making occurs on line, and all of the agendas and meeting minutes are posted on the network, it has been easy for anyone with a PEN account to observe the process by which the group has developed its proposals and to participate in the decision-making. The group has succeeded in finding a middle ground between disclosure and exposure of its plans, knowing that most of city hall, the school board, the chamber of commerce, and a cross-section of citizens are watching, if not participating in, the process. The free publicity attendant on access to the system has served the group well so far.

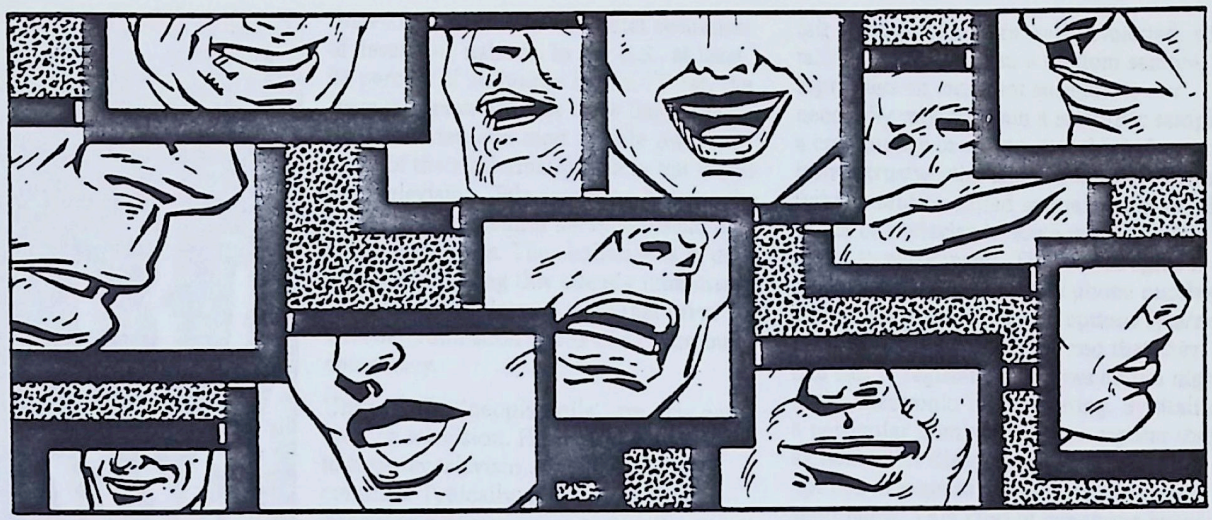
The city has succeeded in providing a mechanism for exercising citizenship beyond casting a ballot in a voting booth. It appears that city staff and city council are willing to act on recommendations emerging from the PEN Action Group. It's clear that two dozen residents have learned how to make their voices heard — electronically — in the halls of city government. ■

Santa Monica Public Electronic Network (Kevin Phillips, Director): Information Systems Department, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401; 213/458-8383.

PEN Action Group (Randy Woodland): 1023 Ocean Park Boulevard #4, Santa Monica, CA 90405; 213/396-5417.

SHWASHLOCK (Michele Wittig): Department of Psychology, California State University, Northridge, CA 91330; 818/885-2827 (mwittig@vax.csun.edu).

KIDS-91 (Kevin McKeown): 848 16th Street #E, Santa Monica, CA 90403; 213/393-3639.



Conscious Democracy Through Electronic Town Meetings

by Duane Elgin

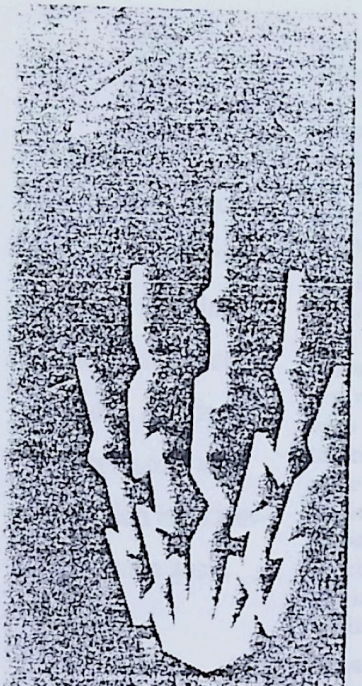
DEMOCRACY HAS OFTEN BEEN CALLED "the art of the possible." If we don't know how our fellow citizens think and feel about issues, then we don't know what is possible — we float powerless in a sea of ambiguity and are unable to mobilize ourselves into constructive action. When we don't know how others think and feel about various options, then the political process can be easily manipulated — and this is the condition in which we now find ourselves. The most powerful and direct way to revitalize our democracy is by improving our ability to know our own minds as a community of citizens.

Given that we can trust the wisdom of the citizenry, the challenge is to find a way to regularly pool the good judgment and foresight of the public.

To cope with problems of massive scale — environmental pollution, resource depletion, species extinction, etc. — citizens must communicate at a level equal to the challenges we face. Because less than one percent of the U.S. population uses computer bulletin boards, these networks have not yet grown to a sufficient scale to support the level of citizen dialogue and consensus-building required by our times. So what practical tools do we have that can genuinely enable a democracy to become conscious of its views — to "know its own mind?"

Duane Elgin is the executive director of "Choosing Our Future" (P. O. Box 820, Menlo Park, CA 94026). He is a former senior social scientist with SRI International, the author of *Voluntary Simplicity* (William Morrow, 1981), and a contributor to *WER/CQ* (#31). —HR

illustration by Brad Hamann



A key question is whether we should trust the wisdom of citizens to guide our democracies into the future. An important insight into this question emerged from George Gallup, who reviewed his experience in polling American public opinion over half a century and found the collective judgment of citizens to be "extraordinarily sound." Gallup discovered that citizens are often ahead of their elected leaders in accepting innovations.

Television dominates the social awareness of developed nations. In the U.S., at least 98 percent of all homes have a TV set, the average person watches more than four hours per day, and most people get a majority of their information about the world from television. Television has become the social brain or central nervous system of modern societies. The challenge is to devise ways of using this already immensely powerful technology in ways that serve the communication needs of a conscious democracy.

Unscientific "people polls" are now common on television. However, this approach to two-way television has critical shortcomings. Typically, anyone watching a television program can vote "yes" or "no" on an issue by dialing a number shown on the TV screen. By opening feedback to all viewers, it often takes an hour or more to get a single response, and then there is no assurance that the feedback is representative of the views of the overall public; instead, it may only reflect the views of a special interest group that invested the time and money to call. This crude barometer of public sentiment is not sufficiently fast or trustworthy to meet the needs of a modern democracy.

For a conscious democracy to function, citizens and decision-makers must be able to obtain an accurate and trustworthy sense of overall public sentiment. Also, feedback must be fast enough to enable citizens to give more than a one-time, kneejerk response to an issue during an hour-long program. We need processes that enable citizens to answer multiple questions that test the strength, texture, depth, and intensity of public sentiment on critical public-policy issues.

We can obtain rapid and representative feedback by gathering responses (via telephone-based, dialed-in voting) from a preselected, scientific sample of citizens. Just as a doctor can take a very small sample of blood and use it to acquire a highly accurate picture of the condition of your entire body, we can similarly use random or scientific samples to get a highly reliable sense of overall community views. Further, because of the limited size of a representative sample, citizens' votes can be tabulated very rapidly, thereby enabling multiple questions and interactions.

Because representative approaches are already used to run democracies, and because scientific procedures for assuring fair representation are well developed, obtaining feedback from a random sample represents an excellent solution to our needs. By relying upon a scientific sample, a community or nation can obtain inputs from a trustworthy cross-section of citizens (who would be called several weeks in advance of a televised "town meeting" and asked to participate). Those who agree to participate are sent a list of phone numbers that correspond to various options (yes/no, multiple choice, intensity) and that they can call to register their views on the night of the Electronic Town Meeting. By dialing a particular number, they can register their agreement or disagreement with various options or express the intensity of their sentiments. This kind of telephone-based, scientific feedback can be obtained in the TV studio in three minutes or less and then be displayed with computer graphics for everyone to see. By combining representative feedback with an informative documentary and in-studio dialogue that employs conflict-resolution skills, a community can know its own mind with a high degree of accuracy on the key issues of the day.

A representative approach to mass community dialogue and feedback was tested successfully in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1987, with a prime-time "Electronic Town Meeting." This pioneering experiment was developed through the cooperative efforts of a nonpartisan media organization ("Choosing Our Future"), the local ABC-TV station, and the League of Women Voters. The program was viewed by more than 300,000 persons; six "votes" were taken during the hour. As questions came into focus, the preselected random sample of citizens was invited to dial in their vote on an issue. Because feedback was so fast, the community was easily able to ask itself a half-dozen questions during the pilot "ETM."

With weekly or monthly Electronic Town Meetings in major metropolitan areas across the nation as well as regular national ETMs, a new level of communication and accountability could be established between the public and decision-makers. Because this feedback would be strictly advisory, it respects the responsibility of decision-makers to give feedback to those who govern. The biggest challenge we now face is to evolve the art and practice of conscious democracy in the communications era. ■

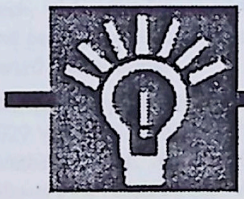
We found that a basic building block of nonprofit success is the ability to maintain contact with related nonprofits in order to share resources and information for achieving common goals.

up a modem, visited the Community Boards office, and connected their computer and multiline phone. "I dialed the WELL," Roberts recalled, "heard the local modem and the WELL's modem whistling at each other without connecting. I persuaded Community Boards to buy a separate phone line. That's all it took."

Our initial concept was to help nonprofits solve specific problems by matching them with appropriate mentors. Once CompuMentor was up and running, we realized that nonprofits' computerization problems were hard to separate from the nature of the organizations and their goals; at the same time, we became aware that mentors' skills were much more extensive than showing people how to do quick and dirty problem-solving like moving a block of text in a word processor or converting a mailing list from one format to another.

We started looking at the more general question of how nonprofit organizations develop, and found that a basic building block of nonprofit success is the ability to maintain contact with related nonprofits in order to share resources and information for achieving common goals. With financial support from the Telecommunications Education Trust, CompuMentor started identifying clusters of nonprofits that could benefit by becoming telecom-linked networks. Then we recruited teams of mentors who, by working together, could address the full range of the nonprofits' computerization needs. One mentor will help a nonprofit learn the basics of word processing or database management, another mentor might help them plug in their modem and use their telecommunication software to go online with the WELL, Peacenet, or Econet, and a third will act as their long-term guide to help them explore the full potential of telecommunication.

We consider ourselves successful when our nonprofit clients ask more questions, not fewer — when people start saying, "Can I do this on my computer?" or "What the heck do you mean I can't do that? Why not?" Questions like those mean our clients have lost their fear and are looking at their computers as tools, and maybe even having fun using them. It's a delight to report that this growth and questioning is perpetually on the upswing — which means we always need more mentors in the Bay Area and, soon, throughout the country. Computerists: you can make a difference; we'd love to hear from you. ■



Sources Of Community-Action Ideas

by Bill Berkowitz

Bill Berkowitz is a professional community psychologist. He is the author of Local Heroes *(Lexington Books, 1987),* Community Dreams *(Impact Publishing Co., 1984), and* Community Impact *(Schenkman Publishing Co., 1982), a textbook on community organization.*

This article originally appeared in The Community Psychologist, *1990 (Vol. 23, no. 3).* —*Howard Rheingold*

JUST ABOUT every community in America has at least one exceptional program or service. It could be a school program, or a housing effort, or job-related, or environmental — something homegrown with a special twist. These programs work, and they could work elsewhere. The problem is that their creators have no incentive to export them, and wouldn't know how even if they had. So many good community-action ideas stay shuttered up; eventually, they wither away.

But recently some collectors (mostly organizations) have seen the value of assembling these programs under one roof. They have started clearinghouses and marketplaces for new community ideas.

How can these sources serve your needs? Here are some possibilities:

- They can help you find a program or service idea in a given field that you can implement or modify back home, or bring to the attention of others.
- They can give you names and addresses of program originators you can contact to ask questions and get more detailed information.
- They can supply you with bibliographical references that lie beyond standard psychology journals and databases.
- Finally, they can open you up to the range of community models already in place, releasing new creativity and energy for addressing local concerns. It can be revitalizing to learn what others have accomplished, particularly since many of the actors here are nonprofessionals.

Two more brief points:

- It's best to telephone for up-to-date information.
- Costs of the more expensive services can be shared, or some local source (e.g., your local government) may already subscribe, or may be persuaded to do so.

CIVITEX (Civic Information and Techniques Exchange). National Civic League, 1445 Market Street/Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202-1728; 800/223-6004 (in Colorado, 303/571-4343); ask for CIVITEX operator.
Over 700 one-page profiles giving details on recent "successful examples of community problem-solving," with local contacts. General topics: health, housing, economic development, environment, human services, education, plus cross-referencing. Computerized. Cost: $25 per search, open to all, free for members ($50). Also has referral information on 200 community organizations, and 800 case studies of inactive community projects.

Community Action Network. American Values, 211 E. 43rd Street/Suite 1203, New York, NY 10017; 212/818-1360.
About 1,000 listings of attempted solutions to "20 critical social problems" and public-relations tools used in such attempts. Much emphasis on use of media. Cost: $10 for catalog; summaries of solutions listed in the catalog are $3 each, with a flat fee of $7 for handling and postage. Also conducts national award competition.

Community Information Exchange. 1029 Vermont Avenue NW/Suite 717, Washington, DC 20005; 202/628-2981.
About 300 "analytic case examples . . . in community-based development." Provides strategy and resource information and technical assistance to community-based organizations and their partners on issues including housing, commercial revitalization, business development, employment, health and human services, and historic preservation. Computerized; accessible by modem. Cost: $75-90 annual subscription fee (includes computer access, newsletters, and bulletins), plus $25-75 per hour of actual database or staff time use; estimates given. Also has databases (included in above cost) on funding sources for neighborhood projects, technical assistance providers, and community development bibliography; offers print publications, computer bulletin board, conferencing, and customized research.

HUD USER. P. O. Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20850; 800/245-2691 (301/251-5154 in Maryland and DC metro area).
Database of nearly 5,500 documents on housing and urban development. Emphasis on government documents (because it is a government program). Computerized. Cost: $5 for "standard searches" in any of seven pre-established housing-related topics (one search yields about 30 citations, with abstracts and document order information); $20 for custom searches. Actual document cost varies. Also produces resource guides, newsletter (free), and audio-visual programs.

Innovations in State and Local Government. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; 617/495-0557.
Print profiles of about 25 innovative state and local government programs per year, based on annual national competition ($100,000 to each of ten annual winners; over 1,900 applicants in 1991). Includes human services and all other areas of government. Cost: $10 per yearly booklet of profiles of 75 semi-finalists; shorter yearly booklets profiling ten annual winners are free. Also has videocassettes, featuring award-winning programs for each year ($20-40).

Livability Clearinghouse. Partners for Livable Places, 1429 21st Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202/887-5990.
Computerized referral service on innovative projects emphasizing quality of life, economic development and social equity in American communities. They maintain a database of all grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts for environmental design, a 3,000-title library, and provide access to all past projects of Partners for Livable Places. Contact them for further details.

Local Exchange (LEX). National League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004; 202/626-3180.
Computerized database of "over 2,000 innovative local government programs." Can give citations or full text. Use requires a PC, modem, and appropriate software. Cost: annual fee of $150 and up, plus $20 maintenance charge; $10-20 per hour for messaging; $30-40 per hour for database access; payment packages available. Fee includes user manuals, tutorials, electronic mail, multiple bulletin board access, plus access to *Urban Affairs Abstract* and several solution-oriented databases.

LOGIN (Login Information Services). 245 E. 6th Street/Suite 809, St. Paul, MN 55101-9006; 800/328-1921 or 612/225-1133.
Computerized database of over 50,000 items covering "all topics pertinent to city and county governments," including health and human services, housing, drug programs, and community development. Can give abstract or full text. Access requires computer, modem, and phone line. Cost: $1,000-3,575 annual membership; no hourly fee; discounts negotiable; electronic mail included.

Management Information Service (MIS). International City Management Association, 777 N. Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC 20002-4201; 202/962-3639.
"A local government inquiry service with more than 10,645 documents." Handles customized inquiries on local government topics. Cost: annual sliding-scale subscription fee starts at $286; includes unlimited searches, various reports, database updates, and *Municipal Year Book*. Inquiry service also available through Local Exchange (above). ICMA also offers separate statistical Urban Data Service, publications, and training programs.

Social Inventions. Institute for Social Inventions, 20 Heber Road, London NW2 6AA, UK; 011-44-81-208-2853.
Not a database as such, but a quarterly journal listing small-scale social inventions of all kinds. Written for a primarily British audience; there's nothing comparable to it I know of in the US. Cost: $30 US for annual subscription, which can include Institute membership upon request. Also publishes *Encyclopaedia of Social Inventions* (1989, $36 US) and *Who's Who of Social Inventors* (free with membership). Sponsors annual social invention contests with cash prizes as well. ■

Computer Conferencing: The Global Connection

by Lawrence B. Brilliant

AS IF IN PAIN, THE HELICOPTER'S JET TURBINE engine screeched sharply, groaned once, and died. Now, silhouetted against the Himalayas, the quiet helicopter began to spiral slowly toward the ground. The passengers, a group of United Nations doctors, looked around furtively as the pilot, his jaw clenched, maneuvered the paralyzed bird down in tight circles.

Lawrence B. Brilliant is one of the original Hog Farmers, a co-founder of the WELL, and the founder of Seva, an international service organization that came about after the successful eradication of smallpox. He went to India as the Hog Farm's "Doctor Larry" in 1970, and stayed on in the Himalayan ashram of his teacher, Neem Karoli Baba, who deputed him to work for the World Health Organization's smallpox campaign. After a decade in India, he became a professor at the University of Michigan, where he first learned about the computer conferencing described in this article. He and his wife and the other founders of Seva then decided to focus their efforts on blindness in India and Nepal, where he now spends most of his time, building eye hospitals and health institutes; he recently pitched in on Wavy Gravy's Berkeley political campaign (*WER* #70), and he is currently assisting his brother with his color-business-card company, Brilliant Color. Seva (a sanskrit word meaning "service to humanity") headquarters are now in San Rafael, California. This article originally appeared in *Byte*, December 1985. —HR

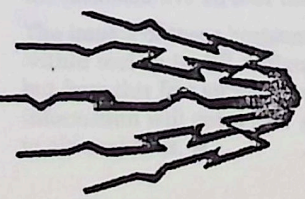


illustration by Brad Hamann

After a silent eternity, the pilot brought the craft down just outside of Biratnagar in the remote terrain of Nepal.

"What's wrong?" a passenger asked.

"Nothing much," the pilot replied, "but we'll need to file a spare-parts order: 'Engine. One.'"

Under almost any other circumstances, a crippled aircraft sitting on the ground in one of the most remote places on earth would rust long before a replacement engine could be located, airlifted in, and installed. But thanks to the then-new technology of computer conferencing, a worldwide "spare-parts order" was filled swiftly, and the chopper flew out of Nepal only days later.

Here is how computer conferencing rescued that helicopter and the UN project:

The helicopter was on loan from Evergreen Helicopter Company in McMinville, Oregon. The only "spare" jet engine was in France, at Allouette Helicopter Company. Four additional organizations were involved in orchestrating the "spare-parts order": the United Nations office in New York, the government of Nepal, the World Health Organization regional office in New Delhi, and a Michigan-based international charity, the Seva Foundation, which was funding the project.

Using a computer conferencing system to which several companies in the aerospace industry subscribe, an "electronic forum" was quickly convened. Despite the dif-

ferences in time zones and geographical locations, the participants quickly reached a consensus on who would pay for the replacement engine, how it would be shipped into Kathmandu, how customs duties might be waived on the new engine, how it could be trucked into the remote landing site, and what would be done with the damaged original engine. Telephone tag, internal organizational hierarchies, and diplomatic protocols were dealt with easily, and the meeting lasted less than a day.

This event illustrates a lesson for anyone trying to get things done in complicated organizations. When speed and effectiveness are the issue, nothing surpasses electronic forums for disseminating information to all concerned and making decisions rapidly.

Today, the computer-conferencing revolution is burgeoning, due to three factors: (1) The enormous investment made in the international telephone system in past decades has provided us all with relatively low-cost communication lines. (2) Technology has brought the cost of personal computers within the reach of virtually everyone in modern industrial societies. (3) Increasingly sophisticated software enables individuals to take part in computer conferencing at home, and gives them the option of renting time on worldwide networks.

Until now, organizational culture has been determined by a critical mass of intelligent people in proximity to each other. This has created towns, universities, and tall office buildings. It is why we have Bell Labs and Xerox PARC.

With the advent of electronic meeting technology, the thrust of civilization can now occur without the factor of proximity. The synergism and excitement of a critical mass of intelligent people will remain a factor, but now they need not live or work close to each other. For the first time, engineers in San Diego, New York, Rome, and Hong Kong, all members of a special-interest group, can meet online all year without ever seeing one another. Perhaps, with this technology, we are seeing the realization of Marshall McLuhan's "global village."

The benefits to business are obvious: decision-making is improved by bringing the best minds of a company together without restrictions of time and location; participants can productively enter a meeting after organizing ideas; they can discuss many different subjects in one meeting without the confusion that sometimes occurs in traditional meetings; immediate printed records of the discussion are available; and spreadsheets, databases, and other productivity tools can be entered into the meeting. With wise use of this technology, the result is increased efficiency.

Computer meeting systems can make a horizontal cut through the standard vertical organizational chart. This distributed electronic organization (DEO), a horizontal stratification of personnel within a company, results in a new and higher quality of interactive group process and organizational decision-making. For the first time, through computer conferencing, we will see communication exchanged on a continuous basis between all the department managers, all the engineers, and all the supervisors, no matter where they are located.

The Seva Foundation, a nonprofit international charity, is a good example of a DEO. It uses electronic meeting systems to allocate its money and make other business decisions. The board of directors' meeting lasts all year and, as a result, the structure of the organization has changed. The executive committee, whose members once flew from various corners of the world for meetings four times a year, has been abolished. Now the entire board is involved on a day-to-day basis with operational decisions, though the members live all over the world.

The impact of these horizontal links within society is still difficult to foresee, but from this free exchange of ideas and information will come new solutions to old problems. ■

With the advent of electronic meeting technology, the thrust of civilization can now occur without the factor of proximity.

The Global Commons

by Brock N. Meeks

WEEKS BEFORE THE MAINSTREAM PRESS discovered that Saddam Hussein and most of his air force were hunkered down in bunkers built to withstand a nuclear blast, details about the bunkers and their construction were available thanks to a thriving "alternative press" corps. This worldwide group of journalists, using a network called PeaceNet, consistently scooped the major newswires and networks during the Gulf war.

Brock N. Meeks is a Washington, DC-based investigative journalist. When he's not chasing down stories stateside he reports from assorted war zones for the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s foreign service bureau. He is currently working on a book about the geopolitical exploitation of the world's refugee community. —HR

illustration by Brad Hamann

Using PeaceNet as its prime distribution channel, this alternative press corps, cobbled together from the peace movement's own "thousand points of light," worked tirelessly to provide a different perspective on the war.

PeaceNet is just one of the networks that operates under the auspices of the Institute for Global Communications (IGC). And during the war PeaceNet acted as a corner of the global commons where information is stripped clean of censorship. IGC itself is a conglomeration of networks and organizations, a fabric woven from electronic data-exchange networks — the information-

age equivalent of duct tape and baling wire. In operation since 1986, IGC and its various networks have dealt with issues from saving the rainforests to exposing human-rights violations across the globe. But it was during the Gulf war that IGC's biggest network, PeaceNet, burst on the scene with real impact.

As the War Goes, So Goes Truth

"We went from zero messages on our Middle East conference to having to start five new conferences just to handle the increase in message traffic," says Howard Frederick, director of PeaceNet.

As the networks stumbled over themselves in search of talking heads and Middle East experts, PeaceNet was busy fielding the comments of hundreds of grassroots experts, mostly members of peace movements who had spent their adult lives working for peace in the Middle East. Suddenly, they found themselves turning to the only central source for information dissemination they could think of, PeaceNet.

"These are the hands-on organizers of the peace movement," said Frederick. "For the first time in history we're seeing the creation of the 'Peace Movement Intelligence Network.'" A central clearinghouse for information about the peace movement, for the peace movement, by the peace movement.

An ominous testament to PeaceNet's effectiveness was brought to light recently when it was learned that law enforcement agencies, both local and federal, were calling PeaceNet offices and pumping its staffers for information regarding the activities cited by its users. When the staffers began referring all calls to their lawyers, the police started logging on themselves, using PeaceNet to track certain activities and planned activities of peace activists throughout the country. The San Francisco Police Department checked in daily to get advance warning of peace demonstrations.

According to Frederick, the alternative press is going to "pool its efforts, using PeaceNet as its distribution vehicle, to create the world's largest, most comprehensive source of news and information" of and by members of the alternative press corps.

Recently the fifth-largest news wire service, Inter-Press Service (IPS), signed an agreement with PeaceNet to become a distribution center for its news stories. The Pacifica radio news service has also signed on with PeaceNet to help distribute the text of its broadcasts. Amnesty International uses PeaceNet to distribute all sorts of reports and "Action Alerts" concerning new and continuing struggles to free political prisoners.

"Within five years we'll be the world's largest alternative news source," said Frederick. Few doubt his word.

Others are creating news services with inspiration and encouragement from PeaceNet. A prime example was *WARNEWS*, a publication that grew out of the frustration and censorship *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Warren Hinckle encountered when he wrote an antiwar piece for the paper.

Hinckle found his inspiration on PeaceNet. He contacted a group of journalists, authors and cartoonists to create the war's first opposition publication. He chose PeaceNet as the vehicle to electronically distribute the newsletter's contents (cartoons, charts and graphs excepted).

IPS will scan various conferences that abound on IGC networks and pick up story ideas from the information uploaded by the users. "There's no better source of information," says Frederick. "Because we're getting input from around the globe, from people living and dying in countries that are in the headlines."

Beyond News

The insights of world correspondents filing stories from war zones are the glitzy, sexy part of PeaceNet. But there is much more beyond the news. There are some 10,000 subscribers worldwide on IGC's networks. During the Gulf war alone IGC was processing about 30 new subscriptions a day.

PeaceNet is only one network carried on IGC. Other networks include EcoNet (an environmental network), ConflictNet (for those working on family mediation and conflicts), and HomeoNet, which deals with the homeopathic arts. There are also hundreds of specialized groups that marshal their collective resources via IGC networks.

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC), with offices in London and Washington, monitors NATO policy

and weapons development, strategy and planning, important meetings, research, and general peace-movement news relating to NATO issues. Members of BASIC correspond via PeaceNet and keep each side of the Atlantic up to date on NATO activity.

Organizers of the more than 3,400 local nuclear-free zones throughout the world meet on PeaceNet to share information on the creation of other nuke-free zones. National nuclear-free-zone offices post their newsletters here, creating a kind of living database of resources.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of IGC is the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), which IGC founded. "Back in 1987 IGC helped to develop an international cooperative effort that would link like-minded groups via the computer," says IGC director Geoff Sears. "At the time, the only additional member we had was GreenNet, based out of London." Short pause. "But we've come a ways since then."

Actually, PeaceNet pre-dated IGC. "PeaceNet's been around since '86," Sears says. "IGC was formed shortly thereafter, so in a sense you have a situation where the child spawned the parent."

APC has networks in Canada, Sweden, Australia, Brazil and Nicaragua. And Moscow and Germany will soon be added, says Sears.

Track-Two Diplomacy

Before Americans learned how to pronounce "glasnost," members of PeaceNet were forging ahead with their own plans to open Soviet society through the use of electronic communication. They did this through agonizingly small steps, using "appropriate Soviet channels," as former PeaceNet director Mark Graham says. By hooking up first with Soviet scientists, members of PeaceNet developed a kind of "track-two diplomacy," wherein ordinary civilians began to talk about how to solve the problems of the two superpowers.

Lessons were learned from those early days, when the Soviets could only reach PeaceNet for a half-hour a day under the watchful eye of the KGB. Today those involved in APC have turned track-two diplomacy into an art form. Across the globe, ordinary citizens are bypassing the often mind-numbing bureaucratic red tape and communicating at the most needed level of all: person to person.

For example, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Nicaragua use their network to share information, not only among themselves, but also among other Central and Latin American NGOs, which use their local networks as gateways into the larger framework of IGC.

Out of the Dark

Yes, the rain forests of Brazil are in peril. But Brazil has other problems. Thousands of homeless children roam the streets of Brazil's major cities. There is no social welfare system to speak of in Brazil. The current answer to Brazil's homeless children problem: vigilante groups simply kill them rather than push the government to house them.

Outrage? Sure. Unnoticed? Hardly. A group known as IBASE (Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis), which focuses on socioeconomic analysis and deals with just this sort of problem, is one of the first groups to use Alternex, the network installed by IGC in Brazil.

Their success has encouraged other NGOs to follow suit. "Results breed results," says Sears. Until IBASE hooked up with IGC, the NGO was struggling to make efficient use of data communications, "but the weight of paying the 'data freight' internationally was killing them," says Sears. "So we created Alternex."

The collaboration between IBASE and IGC amounts to a multi-host PC-based "store-and-forward" system linked to IGC's international computer network. In July 1989, only a few months after approval of the project, Alternex was operating 24 hours a day. Today, more than 130 individual and group users in Brazil and abroad participate in the network, and this number is increasing daily. Users pay a monthly fee, equivalent to about US$7.50, which includes one hour of on-line connection. This connection runs approximately $5 per hour, cheaper than nearly all other electronic mail services.

EcoNet

Just as PeaceNet harbors the frontline troops of the peace movement, EcoNet

is home to groups such as Greenpeace and Global Action Network (GAN).

Environmental groups use EcoNet as a central clearinghouse for information dissemination and discussion. GAN, for example, uses EcoNet as a vehicle for distributing information you can take to the street. Courtesy of GAN you'll find *The Action Guide: A Guide for Citizen Group Action*, online in full text. It's a kind of do-it-yourself "how to fight city hall" for environmental issues.

During the hoopla of Earth Day, EcoNet served as a vital information center for coordinating hundreds of "green days." In recognition of all that work, EcoNet was honored in 1990 by Renew America's "Searching for Success" as the most extensive environmental computer network in the world.

Some would say that the darker side of the environmental movement is "ecoterrorism." Last year during Redwood Summer, a combination strategy session and headquarters for Earth First!, lively debates took place online via EcoNet about the virtues or hindrances of the "monkeywrench" actions encouraged by Earth First!. The conference quickly became a downloadable "do-it-yourself" manual on ecoterrorism.

If all this sounds like a group of radicals romping through the ethernet, here's a counterpoint: US and Canadian state and provincial fish-and-game administrators, major colleges and universities involved in wildlife conservation hang out on EcoNet. These users discuss conservation and environmental protection, national forests, parks, seashores, wildlife refuges, Bureau of Land Management districts, conservation offices of foreign governments, and sources of audiovisual materials, periodicals and directories.

Dirt Farming Via Computer

IGC's mission is "to spread technology and information equally among as many as possible": the info-rich giving to the info-poor. "It's more like sharing with the 'info-poor,'" says Sears. "We're very careful not to perpetuate the 'U.S. knows best' stereotype. There's a lot of things we can learn by watching how [third world countries] use computers and information."

But does a computer network help the farmer in Burkina Faso to improve his life? When Sears is asked this question he barely flinches, and answers: "It doesn't." And he leaves no room for follow-up questions. He's shifting gears, maneuvering the conversation. He acknowledges that the technology is out of the reach of most; computers are still expensive.

"Is [price] really a problem or just an obstacle to hurdle?" asks Sears, and he launches into a sound bite: "You have to think of IGC as being close to the top of an 'information chain.' The networks support grassroots NGOs. The computers help them do their job, which is to help people. The networks are an augmentation, not some kind of miracle drug. Bottom line, people still have to do the work, still have to get out into the field. But now they have better information, they get it faster, and can share it internationally."

Listen to the Children

If there is a sobering, stabilizing focus in these troubled times, it is the thoughts and comments made by children. They hear from the adults that our world is on the verge of eco-detonation, and they fear that one day the air will simply "dry up." And they hear of war: bombs dropping, chemicals that kill. And they wonder, "Will I die?"

They ask questions that cannot be ignored. Is there a place for the children here? They are the next generation of activists; they will inherit a legacy of greed and complacency.

Recently, this letter, written in a childish hand, found its way to IGC:

> Dear PeaceNet,
>
> We are a group of 5th and 6th grader gifted students who attend a magnet school in Miami, Fla. We are (through class discussion and projects) learning about how to become peacemakers. In our gifted center we have already learned a lot about becoming peacemakers, such as, being aware of what is going on in the world, and being open minded; however, we would like more information. Could you please send us some information on becoming peacemakers. Thank you.
>
> Sincerely,
> Future Peacemakers of America

So it goes: track two, second generation. Right on schedule. ■

Big Sky Telegraph

by Frank Odasz, System Operator

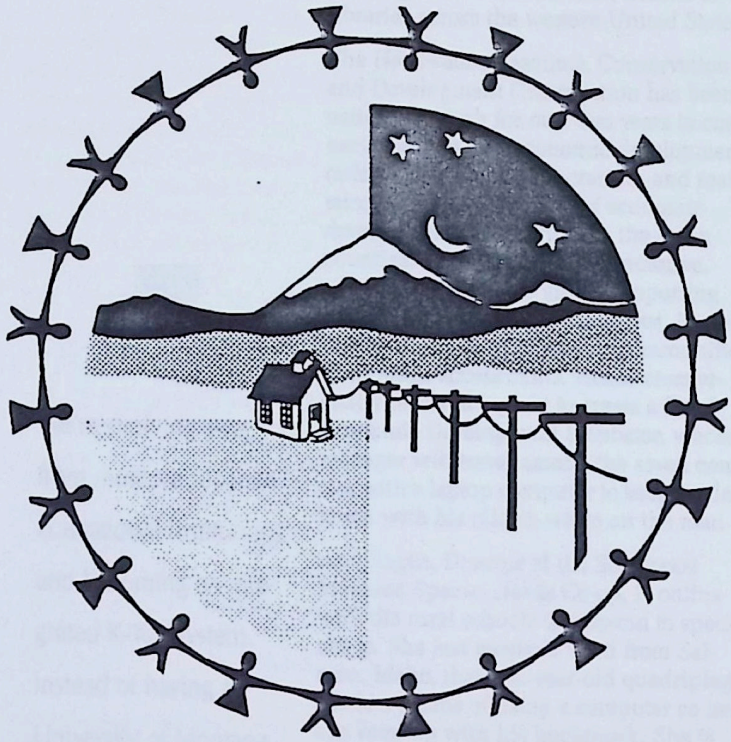
BIG SKY TELEGRAPH (BST) was created by grants from the US West Foundation of Montana and the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust. Its object is to train rural teachers in knowledge-access skills and to serve as a cooperative for individuals and organizations who could benefit from the advantages of online telecommunications. BST went online January 1, 1988. Western Montana College received a grant from the Intermountain Community Information and Library Services Program to create a two-credit online course entitled "Computer Literacy on the IBM" as a means of providing microcomputer skills training at the students' location and choice of time. Larry Hyslop, Western's Microcomputer Center Director, developed and taught the class. Anyone, anywhere, anytime, can take this course, provided access to a microcomputer, modem and phone line.

Word gets around fast in the world of computer-mediated communications, especially where the indefatigable Dave Hughes is involved. A couple of years ago, he started telling stories on the WELL about his efforts to help a couple of idealists in Montana, Frank and Reggie Odasz, to set up a network of electronic bulletin-board systems that could bring the benefits of computer-mediated communications to rural areas. A year ago, when Linda Garcia of the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment told me that the OTA was going to do an assessment of the communication needs of rural America, I told her to find out about Big Sky Telegraph. When I started looking for examples of electronic democracy, I fired up my trusty modem and logged onto Big Sky to see for myself. I left an electronic message for the system operator, and this article was the result of our online encounter. —HR

Jody Webster, Director of the Women's Center of Dillon, has been using BST to teach the 12 Montana Women's Center directors how to share information more effectively. Last year, Jody received funding for homebound women to receive microcomputer training by using loaner computers and modems to receive instruction from their homes or places of work. Sue Roden, of Lima, MT, was able to build her computer skills from the Gas 'n Snacks truckstop between fillups. When she got stuck on Lesson 2, a trucker named Windy looked over her shoulder and got her going again. Sue hopes to use telecommunications to work in Lima as a bookkeeper for someone in Dillon, 45 miles away.

Barb Burke, of Missoula Women for Economic Development, recently received funding to use telecommunications to deliver computer training to apprentice-style learning groups of women in Dillon, Glendive and Miles City. Not interested in college credit, these groups intend to work together to gain mastery of the skills that will open entrepreneurial opportunities for them.

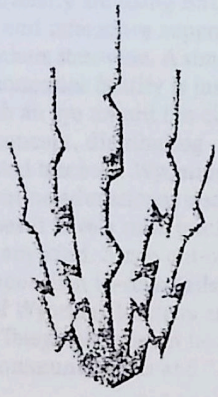
Two years ago, Ralph Neslen of the Colum-



Big Sky Telegraph logo designed by Cathy Weber

bia Education Center's Western Educational Support Team (CEC-WEST) received four grants to link the National Diffusion state facilitators from 15 states. This year, CEC-West received 12 grants that included funds to expand the multistate use of BST for educational sharing. The planned region to be networked extends from the Bering Straits to Pago Pago in American Samoa. During the summer of 1991, 450 rural teachers across the 15-state region will attend workshops to learn how to access BST.

Ron Lukenbill, telecommunications specialist for the Montana Office of Public Instruction, travelled to Russia recently to establish connections between Russian and Montanan teachers. He carried brochures from BST that presented not only educational networking models, but economic development and rural community support solutions as well. Telegraph's online connections already had key persons expecting his arrival. The Silverbow BBS at Butte High School, created by BST's expansion grant this fall, has been used by the Russian-language class to penpal with Russian students, by gifted science students to receive a chaos-theory course direct from MIT, and by a local elementary class to send messages to Sweden. BST already has ongoing communications with an online educational system in Tokyo.



Roger Fuchs graduated from Western in 1988. During his last semester he took a class that covered online telecommunications, the only such course in the Rocky Mountain region. Less than six months later, he became the system operator for a new electronic information service sponsored by the Montana Department of Administration. Twelve different bulletin-board systems are currently running in Montana. The Montana Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Office of Public Instruction, and Northern Montana College all have systems up and running. Many others are in the planning stages. Training individuals in their use is the common problem. Currently, only BST provides online lessons in modem use.

Jack Degolia, Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Forest Service, learned online telecommunications on BST. He created the Wildernet conference on BST for conservation discussions. The Forest Service, loggers, conservationists, and Earth First! have all contributed. Smokey Bear has been an electronic penpal favorite with rural students using BST for telewriting projects.

WESTERN Montana College's Rural Education Center of Montana received a large grant for a rural drug-education program. Twenty rural teachers were trained and served as resource persons in their regions. BST was used to share information between the members of the group and is credited with being a major reason the grant was funded.

Western Montana College's library has used Big Sky Telegraph for two years to receive resource requests from rural schools. Last week Marsha Anson requested a book from Wise River and was surprised to find that it arrived the very next day. Rural schools need no longer be resource-poor. Free ERIC (Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse Database) searches are available online; the results are sent electronically to teachers. Bibliographies by topic, and selected lesson plans, are offered by the library as well as topic-specific boxes of posters and multimedia materials ("dinosaurs" is a popular request). Requests for materials not available at Western are met through the Western Library Network,

We're evolving away from multiple separate educational institutions and becoming an integrated K-100 system. Instead of having a University of Montana, perhaps eventually we'll have "Montana — the University," an electronically integrated resource-sharing educational system without arbitrary institutional barriers.

which gleans materials from dozens of libraries across the western United States.

The Headwaters Resource, Conservation and Development Organization has been using Telegraph for over two years to connect seven county economic development offices. Headwaters has created, and maintains, an online database of economic development information on the seven counties. As an aggressive, innovative, grassroots leadership group supporting economic development initiatives, it seeks to give individuals and rural communities knowledge-access skills. Headwaters recently received a grant to create a Rural Economic Development Incubator, whose manager will travel among the seven counties with a laptop computer to keep in close touch with his clients while on the road.

Ann Rogan, Director of the Southwest Montana Special Needs Co-op, is online with the rural schools to respond to special needs. She just received word from Salmon, Idaho, that a 13-year-old quadriplegic needs a means of using a computer so he can keep up with his homework. She is eager to help; inquiries for the proper information have gone out to numerous other sources via BST.

TECHNOLOGY Education faculty from Western, Northern Montana College, and Montana State University are using BST to offer lesson plans and interactive support and training to teachers statewide. A similar effort for Home Economics faculty is just getting started with an eye toward the circuit-rider/trainer concept, distributing modems to interested teachers. Wyoming does not have an online educational system to speak of, nor does it have a rural teachers' association of any kind. Since out-of-state calls are cheaper than in-state calls, a growing number of Wyoming teachers are coming online on Telegraph to learn how to use online telecommunications and share resources.

Private individuals are empowered by BST as well. Gerry Bauer came to Western two years ago with a severe back injury to find a new means of employment. He now advertises his "Computer Access" computer-supplies business online on BST. Able to conveniently answer questions and receive orders online (such as for a puppy-damaged printer cable at the Polaris school), he has a rapidly growing reputation as a reliable local computer expert. He maintains steady, low-volume sales in computer systems and offers computer training as well. Ralph Martin, a paraplegic from Willow Creek, is in the process of training individuals from various Montana handicapped groups in online skills. Ralph has helped train several rural teachers and hopes to find funding to be a circuit-rider/trainer. Ralph is also coordinating handicapped basketball teams from two states, and would like to be able to do so online, if he could find micros and modems for the various team captains. Bob Bryant is a quadriplegic high-school teacher from Ronan who runs a desktop-publishing business as well as a remote-controlled-kite business from his home and advertises on BST. Bob has been searching for grant funds to allow him to teach online courses for disabled individuals. He helps maintain the ReAbled files area on BST.

Two microcomputers with combined storage of nearly half a billion characters run four customized conferencing systems, each with simple menus for public and private messaging in conferences supported by twelve files areas for document exchange between any type of computer. Through another conferencing system, two keystrokes from teachers' and students' PCs will make an automated phone call to exchange messages, conferences and files to BST's five community BBSs, 8,000 national Fidonet systems, and 15,000 global Unix systems. All reading and writing is done on individual PCs; rapid exchange minimizes communications costs. BST will soon be accessible through a statewide network, MUSENET (Montana University System Educational Network), now linking seven higher-education institutions through T1 (special high-speed data communication) lines. Each institution will be equipped with modem banks to provide regional community access.

Online courses can now be taught at no extra cost to students. Faculty can conference with peers at other institutions, and receive online instruction in global networking for professionals at times of their convenience. Campus access to BST and MUSENET at Western Montana College is available from terminals connected to Telegraph through the campus microcomputer via Ethernet, as well as by modems from faculty desks, selected microcomputers in six computer labs, and the campus library. We're evolving away from multiple separate educational institutions and becoming an integrated system. Instead of having a Uni-

versity of Montana, perhaps eventually we'll have "Montana — the University," an electronically integrated resource-sharing educational system without arbitrary institutional barriers. Distributed conferencing among school-based bulletin board systems may provide a cost-effective means of sharing information and instruction. For example, MIT's Plasma Fusion Lab delivered a high-school chaos-theory course for gifted science students through BST and two of BST's Community BBSs.

WE have funding for 104 additional community sites, selected on a first-come, first-served basis; other communities may still participate for a sum of $300, which includes the cost of a modem and the training of one community telegrapher. Our goals include 40 rural schools (to include ten Native American schools), twelve rural public libraries, twelve rural economic development offices or chambers of commerce, twelve women's centers, twelve Soil Conservation Service or County Extension offices, five handicapped organizations, and five rural hospitals.

The actual number of individual efforts and "dreams in the making" are too numerous to mention. Anyone can begin a new future through a system like Big Sky Telegraph. BST plans to attract funds for much more training, to create more hard examples of economic development successes, and to set up other online systems that can be linked to global networks. Telecommunications today is where electricity was in 1880; we have it, but don't quite know how to use it. Grassroots leadership appears to be the most productive strategy toward demonstrating the potential. Interested? Find a friend with a modem and call 406/683-7680. Access is free at 1200 baud, 8N1. Ask a question and an entire community will respond with offers to help. Soon you'll be in a position to help others, too. ■

Organizing for Social Change

This is a systematic tutorial, powerful sourcebook, or handy cookbook for activists, depending on how you want to use it. If you want to learn the theory and practice of direct action, from the neighborhood to the national level, you can use the book as a self-teaching text. If you want to look up the address of a citizen organization in your state or find out where to get audiovisual materials with a progressive perspective, you'll find a lot to choose from. If you have a specific concern — environmental activism, the mechanics of setting up a nonprofit, designing and leading workshops, tactics for investigative journalism — you can go directly to the "recipe" that interests you. —Howard Rheingold

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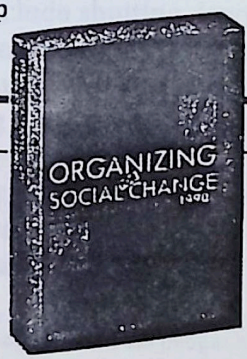
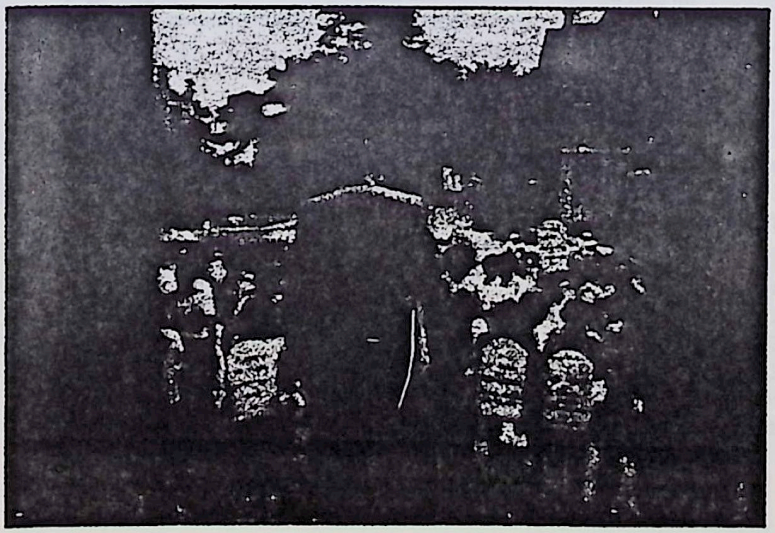
Giving people a sense of their own power is as much a part of the organizing goal as is solving the problem. A local issue, such as getting abandoned houses repaired, illustrates this point. There are many ways in which the houses could get repaired. An outside organization could come in and fix them for the people. That would be a social service approach. Community members could take house repair classes and then repair the houses themselves. That would be a self-help approach. An outside organization could intercede for the community with the officials responsible. That would be an advocacy approach. Another outside group could propose legislation mandating the repair of all houses. That would be a public interest approach.



Organizing for Social Change
Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max, 1991; 271 pp.
$19.95 ($22.95 postpaid) from Seven Locks Press, P. O. Box 27, Cabin John, MD 20818; 800/537-9359 (or Whole Earth Access)

Finally, the community members themselves could organize, and with the strength of their numbers, pressure the politicians and officials responsible for abandoned houses. This method leads to the community developing the power and ability to hold city officials accountable to them. Community members feel that there is a victory and it is their victory. This motivates them to try to solve other problems. When people who were not previously involved hear about the victory, and more important, see the houses repaired, they will join the group. Larger numbers mean more power, and more power means that bigger issues can be won. Eventually the organization becomes a force in the area. This power can be used again and again.

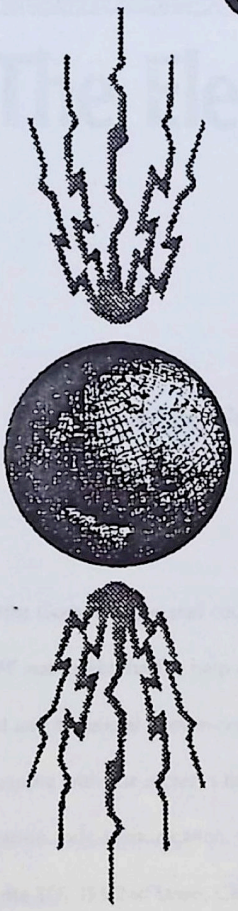


Members of New Jersey Citizen Action, a statewide coalition, pressing for passage of the Right to Know bill.

Earthtrust: Electronic Mail and Ecological Activism

by Don White

EARTHTRUST, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, was set up to deal with international wildlife protection and environmental problems that fall between the cracks of local and national environmental movements. Recent Earthtrust programs include shutting down Korea's illegal whaling operations, expeditions to South America to save Amazon wildlife, acoustic and communications research on whales and dolphins, and groundbreaking work against deep-sea gillnetting fleets. Earthtrust solved the perennial overhead problems confronted by most international organizations by creating an electronic network of campaign workers who use electronic mail to leverage their local efforts into an international program.

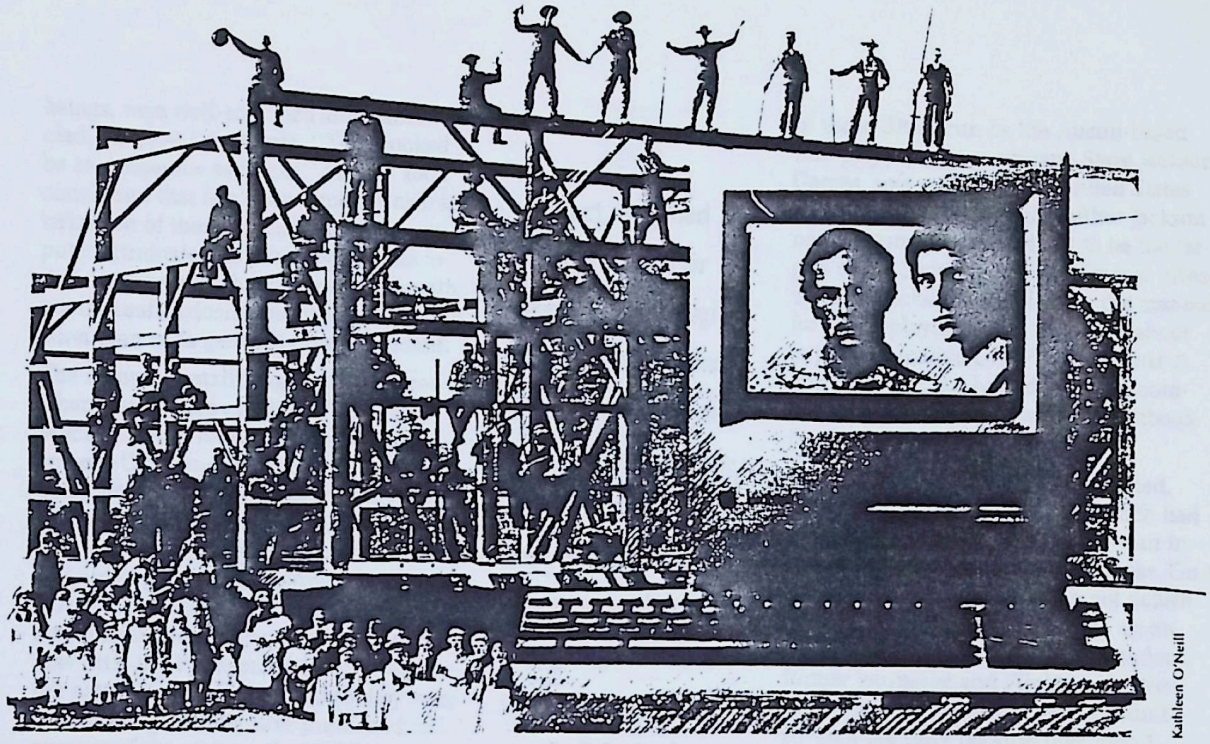


Earthtrust volunteer workers are assigned an Earthtrust electronic mail account or are encouraged to open a personal electronic mail account. In cases where the volunteer will be doing a significant amount of program work, Earthtrust provides the basic electronic workstation: an inexpensive computer, modem and printer. This station costs Earthtrust well under $1,000, and transforms the volunteer's house into an Earthtrust "branch office." That volunteer may then keep in daily communication with other Earthtrust campaigners and the main office in Honolulu. People who are thousands of miles apart can co-author reports and compare data very inexpensively.

By enabling professional people to do good environmental work in their own homes, Earthtrust has tapped into a huge "people resource" of folks who choose not to move to Washington, DC, or other large cities (where most large conservation organizations are based) in order to work on conservation projects. Previously, if people wanted to do such work, the cost of relocation meant that the conservation group would have to pay high salaries. Organizations developed high overheads; this limited the number of persons who could be involved in the effort, and limited the number of issues that could be addressed. These factors have been the most important limits to growth in the national environmental movement.

Has Earthtrust found a panacea? As the organization's director, I'd say electronic mail comes darn close. Our organization has accomplished goals over the last two years that rival the achievements of organizations with 20 times Earthtrust's annual budget. ■

Don White is the Director of Earthtrust (2500 Pali Highway, Honolulu, HI 96817), a nonprofit organization involved in wildlife protection and environmental campaigns. You can contact him via MCI Mail; his user name is earthtrust. —HR



Kathleen O'Neill

The Electronic Frontier Foundation and Virtual Communities

by Mike Godwin

THE ELECTRONIC FRONTIER Foundation is living proof of the existence and effectiveness of virtual digital communities. EFF arose from the interactions of citizens who were, and are, "neighbors" in electronic communities, and EFF has gone on to establish its own communities, not the least of which is the EFF conference on the WELL.

Mike Godwin is the staff counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). EFF was established to help civilize the electronic frontier; to make it truly useful and beneficial to everyone, not just an elite; and to do this in a way that is in keeping with our society's highest traditions of the free and open flow of information and communication. For information about EFF, e-mail mnemonic@eff.org; write EFF, 155 2nd Street, Cambridge, MA 02141; or call 617/864-0665. —HR

The WELL was a key community from the beginning. The way communities normally shape their responses to outside events is for neighbors to chat — perhaps even gossip — over the fence. This kind of informal exchange of information led to two crystallizing events behind EFF's formation. The first was an online WELL conference on "hacking" sponsored by *Harper's* magazine. One result of that conference was that WELL user and Grateful Dead lyricist John Perry Barlow met and befriended a couple of hackers who went by the cyberpunkish noms-de-hack "Acid Phreak" and "Phiber Optik." Although they "knew" each other electronically, Barlow's face-to-face meeting with Acid and Optik was a revelation: "Acid and Optik, as material

beings, were well-scrubbed and fashionably clad," Barlow later wrote. "They looked to be as dangerous as ducks." Barlow soon concluded that law enforcement's characterization of these hackers as major computer criminals was disproportionate to their actions, which had more to do with intellectual curiosity and youthful exploration than with genuine criminal intent.

The second crystallizing event occurred when Barlow and another WELL user, Mitch Kapor (a founder of Lotus Development Corp. and On Technology), compared notes about their respective visits by FBI agents. The agents were investigating the unauthorized copying and distribution of Apple's proprietary source code for the ROMs in the Macintosh computer, and both Kapor and Barlow were startled by how little the FBI seemed to know about the nature of the alleged crimes they were investigating. Barlow later published an account of the visit on the WELL (print-published as "Crime and Puzzlement" in *WER* #68).

As Barlow wrote in the March issue of the Foundation's print newsletter, *The EFFector*: "Mitch's experience had been as dreamlike as mine. He had, in fact, filed the whole thing under General Inexplicability until he read my tale on the WELL. . . . Several days later, he found his bizjet about to fly over Wyoming on its way to San Francisco. He called me from somewhere over South Dakota and asked if he might literally drop in for a chat about [the agents' visits] and related matters. So, while a late-spring snowstorm swirled outside my office, we spent several hours hatching what became the Electronic Frontier Foundation."

Having met in person when Barlow interviewed Kapor for *Microtimes*, the two future EFF cofounders had used the WELL to build on their face-to-face contact. In effect, they had become next-door neighbors, although Barlow lived in Pinedale, Wyoming, while Kapor lived in Brookline, Massachusetts. Says Barlow: "There was a sense that what was going on was a threat to our community." So Barlow and Kapor did what neighbors often do in response to a neighborhood problem — they formed a citizens' group. In this case, the citizens' group was EFF.

I had a chance to play my own role in another example of such concerned-citizen action in Austin, Texas, which has more than its share of computer bulletin-board systems (BBSs). On March 1, 1990, one

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of those BBSs, run by the Austin-based role-playing game company Steve Jackson Games, was seized by the United States Secret Service. Although neither Jackson nor his company turned out to be the targets of the Secret Service's criminal investigation, Jackson was told that the manual for a role-playing game they were about to publish (called *GURPS Cyberpunk 2* and stored on the hard disk of the company's BBS computer) was a "handbook for computer crime."

Austin's BBS community was startled, then outraged, by the seizure, which had the potential of putting Jackson — an innocent third party — out of business. On a BBS called Flight there was a hot debate about the media's failure to pick up on Jackson's story. A third-year law student, former journalist and Flight user, I theorized on Flight that the media hadn't covered the story because they didn't *know* about it. Or, at least, they didn't understand the issues.

To test my theory, I gathered together several postings from local BBSs and from Usenet, the distributed BBS that runs on the Internet and connected computers, and trekked down to the *Austin American-Statesman* office to talk to a friend of mine, Kyle Pope, who covered computer-related stories. I also took him photocopies of the statutes that give the Secret Service jurisdiction over computer crime, and lots of phone numbers of potential sources. At the same time, I called and modemed materials to John Schwartz, a friend and former colleague who was now an editor at *Newsweek*.

Pope's lengthy, copyrighted story on the Secret Service seizure appeared in the *American-Statesman* the following weekend. John Schwartz's story, which covered the Steve Jackson Games incident as well as the Secret Service's involvement in a nationwide computer-crime "dragnet," appeared in *Newsweek's* April 30 issue. The heavy-handed tactics and overbroad seizure at Steve Jackson Games became a symbol of the law-enforcement community's misconceptions and fears about young computer hackers, and provided a context for Barlow's and Kapor's discussions about creating EFF.

Once they agreed on what needed to be done, Kapor and Barlow went back to the WELL and drew upon the collective wisdom of that community for input into the tactics and strategy of the newly formed

foundation. The same week they announced EFF's formation in Washington, DC, they started the EFF conference on the WELL — a sort of community-within-a-community which quickly became one of the system's most active conferences.

Soon afterward, they created two new newsgroups on Usenet — comp.org.eff.news and comp.org.eff.talk. The latter, like all active newsgroups, has itself become a community of sorts, with a diverse collection of voices addressing — sometimes heatedly — the issues that arise as we proceed to explore and civilize the electronic frontier.

Almost immediately after the foundation was officially launched, EFF's efforts to assist in the defense of electronic publisher Craig Neidorf had tangible results. Neidorf had been prosecuted for publishing a Bell-South text file relating to the E-911 system (see "Attacks on the Bill of Rights," *WER* #70). EFF's law firm submitted an *amicus curiae* brief defending Neidorf's First Amendment rights as a publisher. We also helped Neidorf's defense counsel assemble experts to testify on his client's behalf. And a member of the WELL's EFF conference came up with information that was critical in persuading the prosecutors to drop their case.

It's clear that EFF is not only a product of electronic communities, but has also produced some new communities while continuing to contribute to old ones. It's also clear that the sense of community was seeded by face-to-face contact at key points: when Barlow met Acid and Optik, for example, and when he interviewed Kapor. The need for at least occasional face-to-face contact, Kapor still stresses, means that current networks and BBSs don't simply create community; instead, they amplify it. To be even more accurate, the two phenomena exist in a complex state of coevolution, with face-to-face contacts fueling the electronic relationships and vice versa.

One of the things you often see when you read discussions about EFF on the WELL or on Usenet is a sense that EFF has become a representative body. While this is misleading — EFF is not yet a membership organization — it's still the case that EFF is regarded as an advocacy group for electronic communities in general. You'll often read comments from Usenet folks who think the most appropriate pronouns when talking about the EFF are "we," "us," and "our."

If that neighborly sense of belonging doesn't prove the existence of a community, I don't know what does. ■

Computer Ethics

Despite being a textbook, Computer Ethics is surprisingly readable. I'd thought from the title that this book would rehash the usual subject matter of computer-ethics panels — whether it's ever appropriate to "enter" someone else's computer without authorization, whether viruses and worms are the equivalent of vandalism or sabotage, and so on. Forester and Morrison go much further, exploring the whole domain of computer-ethics topics. I was pleased to see that the authors approach such questions as whether a software manufacturer has an ethical obligation to its customers to provide a working (and safe) product, or whether a computer researcher can ethically accept an SDI grant for a project she doesn't believe will ever work. The book is a good attempt to deal with the emerging field of computer ethics comprehensively, and its discussions are punctuated with some memorable (and sometimes frightening) anecdotes. —Mike Godwin

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Without adequate legal protection, genuinely innovatory individuals and companies might wonder whether the meagre rewards for their efforts really justify the time and money expended on original research and development. On the other hand, intellectual property owners might try to stake too large a claim for their innovations in order to squelch new ideas and to get a jump ahead of their competitors. This could strengthen the hand of established large firms over small entrepreneurial firms, who have been the traditional innovators of the industry. The question is whether the developmental work put in justifies the influence innovators may gain over both users and competitors. There is a clear need to strike a balance between the interests of these three groups, as we tread the fine line between piracy and progress.

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The mass media has tended to sensationalize hacking, whilst soundly condemning it. But there are other points of view: for example, in many instances the breaching of systems can provide more effective security in future, so that other (presumably less well-intentioned) hackers are prevented from causing real harm. A good illustration of this was the penetration of British Telecom's electronic mail system in 1984 by Steven Gold and Robert Schifreen, which resulted in a rude message being left in none other than the Duke of Edinburgh's account! This incident attracted enormous publicity and led directly to improved security arrangements for the whole of the Prestel system. Gold and Schifreen were therefore extremely indignant at being treated as criminals — and this illustrates once again the discrepancy between what the law considers to be criminal behaviour and how hackers perceive themselves. Although Gold and Schifreen were convicted under the Forgery Act and fined a total of £2,350, an appeal saw the charges quashed. It was argued that since the hackers caused no damage and did not defraud anyone, then they could not be held guilty of an offence.

Computer Ethics

Tom Forester and Perry Morrison, 1990; 193 pp.

$19.95 ($22.95 postpaid) from MIT Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142; 800/356-0343 (or Whole Earth Access)

Information Doesn't Want

by Elin Whitney-Smith

The problem is:
"Information wants to be free" (S. Brand).
Information is invisible.
Information is obvious.

First of all, information doesn't want. *People* want. And the problem is:

These are never the people who are visible to economics or history. These are the ordinary people who don't seem to act on the grand stage of world dynamics. They are not the "oppressed" of Marxist literature, just the ordinary people, people who take the bus to work, who shop in K-mart, who eat at McDonald's. They want information to be free and they have changed history. They have determined which country will be dominant, not in a mystical sense of "national will," but in the ordinary sense of day-to-day decisions about what to buy, how to make a living. They want information to be free because like all of our kind they love information — songs, stories, games. We are the great juvenile species of ape. We never grow up. We keep needing to know more — more soap operas, more cartoons, more loud music, more junk. Even important economic information is crass, commercial, materialistic, and in the West . . .

Information makes us rich.

As evidence of this I can point out that in Spain, books were banned by the Inquisition, so the printers moved to the Protestant countries, and that is why Max Weber could claim that Protestantism leads to capitalism. It wasn't the religion, however, it was the *press*, printing broadsides, novels, playing cards, how-to books, pornography, ledgers, texts and trash — an avalanche of printed material.

Scholars say, "Tut, tut. Yes, the Inquisition — terrible, terrible. But after all, people who wanted books could get them, there was an active black market."

But only those who were already part of the literate upper classes used the black market. The ordinary tradesman in Spain didn't risk his neck for books.

And the scholar responds, "Yes, yes, the backwardness of the peas-

Elin Whitney-Smith is a confessed cybernetician interested in how human animals communicate to control their world.

She does consulting on organizational issues related to information technologies in business and education with Fulcrum Consulting, and is associated with the Center for Studies of Cybernetics in Complex Systems at Old Dominion University.

She divides her time between Kezar Falls, ME, Washington, DC, and Norfolk, VA, and she misses San Francisco Bay.

Currently, she is turning her dissertation into a book, tentatively titled Information Technologies and Wealth: Cybernetics, History and Culture. *—Howard Rheingold*

Elin Whitney-Smith

Elin Whitney-Smith

ant." Then when the economy of Spain collapses, the scholar quotes Gonzalez de Cellorigo writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, ". . . There are rich who loll at ease or poor who beg and we [Spain] lack people of the middle sort."

I can offer the same explanation for the economic collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe and people will say, "Yes, yes, a free press is important but look, right now, the people need practical solutions rather than the right to criticize the government." The problem is that:

The effect of information is obvious.

If there is an increase in information access in a society there will be a corresponding increase in innovation. Of that innovation, a certain amount will be successful and will lead to economic growth. No one will object to that statement and no one will be particularly interested. But when I say all economic development and cultural change can be accounted for in relationship to information access, I will be dismissed as a crackpot. And this is because:

The effect of information is invisible.

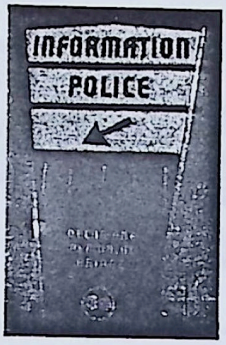
We can pinpoint the introduction of a new idea and believe economic development is associated with this idea. That is what Weber tried with his argument that Protestantism leads to capitalism. Sombart also took this tack when he suggested that people could think more rationally about business once they learned double-entry bookkeeping. His problem was explaining why capitalism didn't develop in the eleventh century when rationalized bookkeeping was invented by Leonardo Fibonacci. He attributed this failure to an inherent backwardness of the Middle Ages and then attributed the rapid spread of bookkeeping and the habits of mind which go with it, after the middle of the fifteenth century, to the "dawning of the Age of Enlightenment." The fact that the printing press with moveable type was invented in 1450 didn't occur to him as an explanation. It didn't even occur to him to wonder why Luca Pacioli is considered the father of double-entry bookkeeping when he did not invent it (he only published a *printed* text in 1458). He also didn't ask why the Middle Ages were inherently backward, or what it means to say "the dawning of the Age of Enlightenment."

We also do not see the importance of the press implied in the fact that our country is called America, after the man whose name was on the printed maps, not Columbia after the discoverer. What we don't see is that a fact becomes real and effective only when it becomes part of the day-to-day life of ordinary people . . . and this is the role and effect of information technologies. The technologies, in and of themselves, do not create development. The technologies increase access to information to such a point that it is impossible to control.

The interesting thing about control and information is:

Information technologies are always related to an increase in control.

Speech allowed our ancestors to emerge as the dominant animal, who for the first time controlled the world rather than being controlled



Writing was an elitist technology. In present-day terms, writing was like a big mainframe computer used by the existing elite to control war and the economy, and manipulated by high priests who knew the secrets of its use. The press made information access "free" in the same way that PCs are making computing access "free."

by it. The invention of drawn symbols allowed us to teach and learn without the necessity of firsthand experience. The invention of writing accompanied the rise of hierarchical city-states, and those who controlled information controlled everything.

Writing was an elitist technology. In present-day terms, writing was like a big mainframe computer used by the existing elite to control war and the economy, and manipulated by high priests who knew the secrets of its use. The press made information access "free" in the same way that PCs are making computing access "free."

The telegraph was elitist, and was used to control the vast railroad empires and to communicate in war. Like a mainframe, it needed specialists to manipulate it with a specialized language. The telephone, like the press and the PC, is a mass technology which allowed many smaller empires (called rationalized business organizations) to be created. In the 1920s it shifted world economic dominance from England to the United States. It was in the twenties that the 'phone became common in the U.S. The English attitude was expressed by the head of the postal and telegraph service, "No one is more familiar with the telephone than I . . . but if I want to send a message I use a boy."

What information technology always does is:

Allow people who use it to innovate in how they run things. They increase their control of production processes. People standardize things, parts, processes, relationships (contracts, credit). They create new forms of political, social, and business structure. Invariably they change education and increase professionalization. What allows these innovations to work is an increase in communications and communication channels.

Information-based innovations in social, business and political structure increase redundancy in the system. This makes the system more stable. When the system is stable it is able to grow. If there is a lot of information access then there will be a lot of growth. If there is restricted information access there will only be growth where there is access. In China in the twelfth century, in Spain in the seventeenth century, and in the USSR and Eastern Europe in the twentieth century, only the top layer had information access and only the top layer grew; in Holland, England and the United States, where there was free access to information and information technology, there was innovation throughout the whole society and the whole society grew. A simple numeric relationship.

The problem is:

The Information Police are real and profitable.

If a person is in a position to control information access it is in his or her interest to do so. In the short term the Emperor of China, the grandees of Spain, the Communist Party elite, the heads of businesses, benefit from exclusive access to information: they get rich. If we are not to become the grandees of the coming century we have to use information capabilities to increase redundancy. This will allow us to:

Increase control of the processes of production and business, and

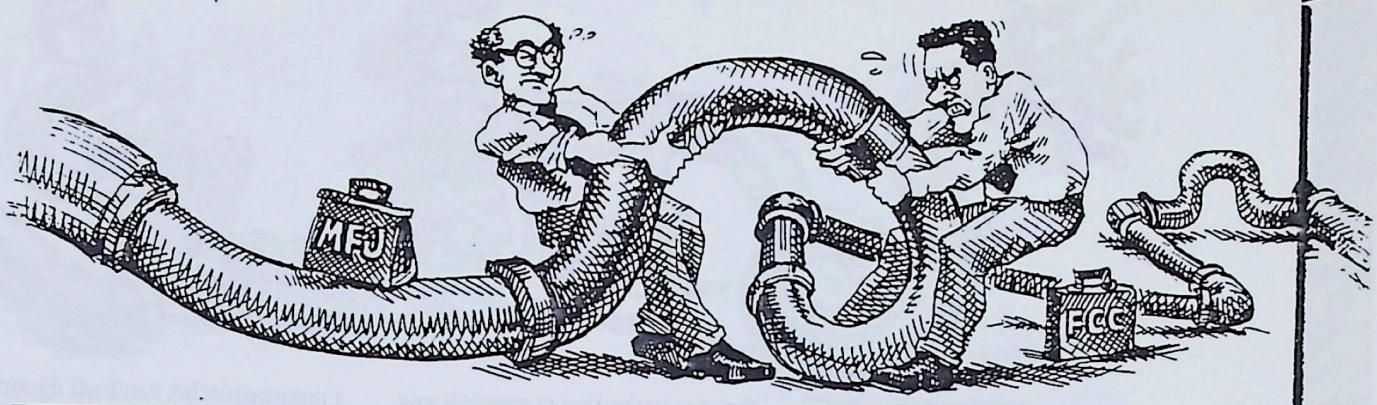
decrease our control of information and information technology.

Because:

The economic health of any single group is ultimately tied to the health of the economy as a whole.

The long term is getting shorter all the time, and . . .

The group with the free-est information wins. ■



CONFLICT OR COOPERATION? NREN And US Telecom Policy

BY THOMAS S. VALOVIC

WHILE OFFICIAL telecommunications policy in the US is embodied in the Communications Act of 1934, the breakup of AT&T under the terms of the Modified Final Judgement (MFJ) is generally viewed as this nation's current *de facto* telecommunications policy. Even so, policy issues in the US — under the significant influence and firm hand of Judge Greene, who administers the case-by-case implementation of the MFJ — tend to flip-flop between a variety of federal agencies and entities. The FCC acts as another major contributor to telecom policy through its rulemaking actions involving regulated common carriers' investments, rates, and services. The Commerce Department's NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) provides still other policy recommendations, primarily acting as an adviser to the Executive Branch, and makes major recommendations on national policy such as those found in its Telecom 2000 report. (In fact, in that report, the possibility of establishing a cabinet-level position for telecommunications in the US was seriously entertained.)

Congress and the Department of Justice get into the act as well, the latter with respect to the antitrust and legal aspects of maintaining the MFJ. In addition, the state public-utility commissions have their say in matters telecom, via direct regulation of the regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) in their respective jurisdictions.

As can be seen from the above, a lot of entities are involved in communications public policy in the US, to say the least. So, given this scenario, does the US have a national telecom policy? Yes. Is it a fragmented hodgepodge of often-conflicting directives and counterdirectives, proposals and counterproposals, and legal headbanging? Yes to that also. This is in stark contrast to the way many other countries implement their communications policies, wherein cabinet-level ministries are fully dedicated to telecommunications and postal-service issues.

Just as telecom policy has become balkanized in the US, so have telecom proposals. The implementation of the NREN proposal to link up the major academic and research facilities in the US, for example, can be proposed and implemented outside the scope of these various policymaking entities without conflicting with existing policy. But when NREN is discussed as a "national infrastructure," and concepts like the provision of "universal service" are introduced — what might be called an "extended NREN" — then the focus of discussion must necessarily move to the wider platform of existing national telecom policy. Other possible NREN proposals and options — such as using this national infrastructure to provide cable services, or provide advanced information services to residences — also require that other means and methods for delivering these services, already under consideration in other forums, be engaged and brought to the table.

I met Thomas Valovic, Senior Editor of Telecommunications *magazine ($60/12 issues; 617/769-9750), via the WELL. He has a view of the NREN debate that is somewhat different from Roger Karraker's.*

— Howard Rheingold

Blind Men, Elephants and Blue Skies

At present, it appears that proposals for an extended NREN are still being discussed unofficially, al-

though the Bush Administration's Office of Science and Technology Policy has stated that the development of an NREN-based national infrastructure extending to the residential level would indeed be a desirable goal. Further, it seems apparent that NREN means many different things to many different people at this stage of the game — a kind of "blind man and elephant" scenario. Many of the ideas currently being discussed are simply "blue sky" exercises which purport to explore possible options and hypothetical scenarios. One reason for the confusion over NREN's ultimate purpose and function is that NREN activity appears to be heavily supported by the computer community. Traditionally, and to the detriment of the nation's overall telecom policy, computer and telecom players have tended to operate in independent spheres. It is important to avoid perpetuating this policy-level "cognitive dissonance" in further debate over how best to develop these networks.

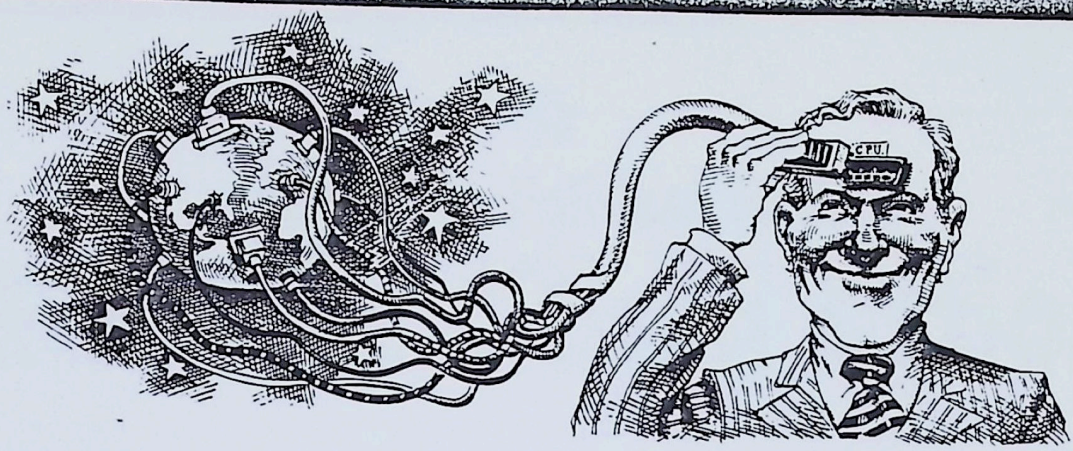
The fractionated state of US telecom policy is a little easier to understand when one looks at what's really happening in telecommunications in the US. The major dynamic at work here is the competition taking place over who will get to be the delivery channel for advanced information services, especially at the residential level, services that could include voice, data, video, and multimedia (aggregates of all three). Everyone, in other words, "wants to be your telecom friend." Cable TV (CATV) interests want to provide the major channels of service delivery to individual subscribers for interactive video and data services. So do the RBOCs. So do the newspaper publishers. And now IBM has jumped into the act with Prodigy. (However, only CATV and RBOCs, it's worth noting, currently control the physical media leading to the home, i.e. "conduit.") And, of course, there is the latest entrant: universalized NREN! This natural competition was part of the rationale for divestiture, since that event was envisioned to create prospects for better and more cost-effective services for users. However, there's a downside: such competition also creates a lot of stagnation at the level of public-policy planning as these various interests compete for their pieces of the telecom pie.

When viewed in this context, NREN might be seen as yet another approach to getting our stagnant telecom policy moving again, a situation largely caused by the fact that the RBOCs continue, for the most part, to be restrained from providing advanced information services by Judge Greene (other than via the current "gateways"). Some observers even see universalized NREN proposals as an "end-run" around this MFJ-induced policy gridlock. So why won't Greene let the RBOCs provide this information infrastructure? Among other reasons, because they still control the local exchange (i.e. local service) on a monopoly basis. In other words, as long as the RBOCs control "conduit," they have to be restrained with respect to "content."

Turn the Bells Loose: Competition and Content

How could this impasse be resolved? Judge Greene could lift the MFJ-based restrictions on the RBOCs as they pertain to information services. But Greene can't do that until real competition finds its way into the local exchange so regulators can feel comfortable "turning the Bells loose" with respect to their involvement in providing content. The prospects for this kind of competition are good, but unfortunately many years away. New forms of wireless communications, such as PCN (Personal Communication Networks) and other cellular-based systems, hold excellent promise for allowing this to occur.

Is a national information infrastructure based on NREN the answer? This isn't an easy question to answer. From one vantage point, here's yet another constituency that "wants to be your telecom friend," the high-end computer users in the scientific/research community. In this sense, NREN represents just another competing mechanism for the delivery of advanced information services, which may serve to thwart or stall the process if not channeled through appropriate policy channels. After all, there is a long, tortuous history involved in hammering out the answers to the infrastructure problem, and many in the computer community appear to be only marginally aware of these deliberations. On the other hand, it could be argued that the



extended NREN proposal might alleviate the current policy gridlock that's stalling further progress, and might leverage more proactive and creative thinking in Washington towards a resolution. In any event, it does seem clear that sooner or later the extended NREN concept — assuming it continues to be seriously entertained — will need to be placed on the national telecom policy agenda. Doing so will ensure that NREN, along with competing alternatives, can be examined in light of the full range of subscriber needs such services are intended to address (and not just individualized NREN constituencies, e.g. libraries, high-end research, and so on). However, moving ahead with such proposals (especially moving ahead to implement them via private means, without adequate public scrutiny and a sense of regulatory perspective) may only serve to exacerbate a telecom policy already suffering the "death of a thousand qualifications." It would also run the serious risk of excluding from consideration legitimate social concerns that need to be factored into such discussions.

In other words, the telecommunications future of this country is too important to leave either to chance, the vagaries of various special interest groups in the private sector, or the enthusiasms of well-intentioned innovators whose vision is no substitute for the full process of open and well-considered public scrutiny. ■

Technologies without Boundaries

This book is not about technology as much as it is about the future of human societies worldwide. In 1983, Ithiel de Sola Pool's ***Technologies of Freedom*** *(WER #50, p. 33) pointed out how the rights of free speech as we cherish them in the US are challenged by electronic communication technologies. At the time of his death in 1984, de Sola Pool had almost completed a manuscript that extended his theories to a global level. Professor Eli Noam edited the manuscript to produce this book about the forces of change in human life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness that have been triggered by global electronic communications.*

You might not agree with de Sola Pool's conclusions, but you don't have to be a computer expert, a communications maven, or a political scientist to understand his arguments.

—Howard Rheingold

•

The system of free public discourse is at stake in a debate over policies that are only tangentially related to freedom. The debate may take place in terms of technical efficiency and the protection of economic institutions, but its outcome may determine how much political freedom will exist some decades hence. Technology is spurring the debate; it alone need not shape the outcome. But unless decision makers understand the implications well, then technology and economic interests may do just that.

Technologies without Boundaries
(On Communications in a Global Age)
Ithiel de Sola Pool, 1990; 352 pp.

$27.50 ($29.50 postpaid) from Harvard University Press/Customer Service, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; 617/495-2600 (or Whole Earth Access)

Powershift

Europe watches nervously as Morocco builds a television network capable of broadcasting to the eleven million Muslim immigrants throughout the continent.

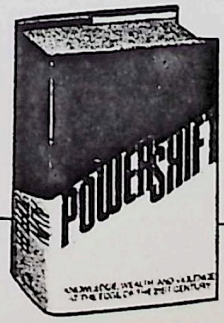
Intelligence satellites were once monopolized by five countries (the US, USSR, Japan, France, India). That monopoly is being challenged by satellite programs in countries such as Iraq, Brazil, and China.

The last battleground of the Romanian revolution was Studio 4 of "Free Romanian Television." It was only after the station continually broadcast pictures of the corpses of Ceausescu and his wife that the fighting actually stopped.

What do all these things have in common? It used to be that information was like a river — dam it at any point and everyone downstream was at the mercy of the big guys with the bulldozers. But now there are too many ways to get around the info dams: cellular phones, computer networks, fax machines. Individuals and small groups now have the information power formerly held by nations. What does that mean for the future? ***Powershift.*** *—Richard Kadrey*

Powershift
(Knowledge, Wealth & Violence in the 21st Century)
Alvin Toffler, 1990; 585 pp.

$22.95 ($25.45 postpaid) from Bantam Books/Direct Sales, 414 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016; 800/223-6834 (or Whole Earth Access)



PART THREE:

BACKYARD DEMOCRACY

Access to Political Tools:
Effective Citizen Action

BY JIM WARREN & HOWARD RHEINGOLD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LLOYD DANGLE

The "Interview" conference on the WELL is one of my favorite information-grazing grounds. Around election time 1990, I found Jim Warren dispensing advice about what works and what does not work in citizen political action — working for or against a candidate or referendum, starting or supporting a ballot initiative. I snarfed the interview from the WELL and persuaded Warren to drop by the WER offices for a chat. The following material is an amalgam of his online and in-person advice.

If the personal-computer revolution had a founding father, Jim Warren was he. He founded the old West Coast Computer Faires, founded and published InfoWorld *and the* Silicon Gulch Gazette, *and was founding editor of* Dr. Dobb's Journal. *At the moment, he is putting his energies into organizing the First Conference on Computers, Freedom & Privacy. You can read his "Futures" column in* MicroTimes *and find him on the WELL, almost daily (jwarren@well.sf.ca.us).*

—Howard Rheingold

Right of copy is retained by Jim Warren, but all readers are welcome to copy this for any noncommercial purpose and/or free distribution.

How I Learned What I Learned

In the anti-war sixties, I was General Secretary of the (California) Midpeninsula Free University during its greatest growth and activity. Later, after selling the Computer Faire in 1983, I took on San Mateo County for abusing and exploiting its unincorporated rural minority. This prompted a Grand Jury investigation that supported my complaints. The planning director was forced to resign and a citizens' appeals board was created. Later, I was elected a county-wide trustee of the three-campus community-college district. This was a highly politicized position in a county with a population of 600,000, where it's been said that the Number One avocation is politics.

Thereafter, disgusted by the ongoing abuse of the mountain and rural residents who were supposed to be represented by a county supervisor, "Atherton Anna" Eshoo, I ran against her when no one else would. I knew I didn't have a chance of winning, but I simply wasn't going to let her arrogance go unchallenged. As soon as I filed, all sorts of political pros came out of the woodwork, offering advice as to what really works, versus what naive citizens *think* should work. A lot of it was simple advice, gained from direct experience, and proven in numerous municipal, county, and statewide elections.

Folks who recognize these realities can have much more potential political clout than those who are unaware or who refuse to accept them. Those who use this information enhance their ability to cause change in comparison to those who disregard them. All of it takes work, time and effort. Most of it can be used by rich and poor alike. Most of it doesn't require computers, but they can help greatly.

Getting Started

• *Start Early.* If you want to run a successful political campaign, you have to start many months before the beginning of the campaign season. Wait until people are thinking of politics and you've waited too long.

• *Do it Right.* If your interest is a candidate or initiative with a campaign already in progress, you can volunteer to work with their organization or start your own. Either way, follow the campaigning regulations, or expect major public embarrassment.

Trivial example: It's useful to send "Dear Friend" cards (more on that below) and other publications. They are more effective with a personal name and address than with a "Committee to Elect" address. But anything funded by, or even coordinated with, an official campaign organization must have that organization clearly identified in it.

The rules are extensive and explicit; you can get them from your county clerk or Secretary of State. Visit the local election officer and say you want to run for office or form a campaign committee or create an initiative. Unless they are real political hacks, they will be very helpful and will provide you with instructions. Nonetheless, you had better assume everything you say will be repeated to any interested incumbents, often within minutes. It depends on how cozy the clerk is with those incumbents.

Amateurs often seriously screw up by failing to meet the reporting requirements of the various campaign reporting laws and regulations. The instant you miss a reporting date or misreport information, your opponents — if they know what they are doing — will accuse you of VIOLATING the Fair Political Practices Act and LYING in your political reports. And the newspapers will print the accusations.

• *Open a Bank Account.* Open a separate bank account in the name of "The Committee for _____" or in the name of "X for Dog Catcher." Don't let campaign money flow through your own account. Ask people to make checks out to the special account. Some will be drawn to you, personally; just endorse them over to the special account.

Political Action: What Works, What Doesn't

Most professional campaign managers agree that the following are effective campaign tools — listed in approximate order of effectiveness, starting with the most effective.

1. *Face to face contact*, by candidate or supporter, door to door and in public places. If you have volunteers with good people skills, don't waste their valuable talent stuffing envelopes in a back room. Send them out to meet people. Equip them with some brief comments, a well-designed brochure and a walking-order list of registered voters (I'll say more about these later).

2. *"Dear Friend" notes and cards*, distributed by candidates' or issues' supporters to people who know the writer. The best advertising for anything is still word-of-mouth recommendations from someone you know, even though it may be the most casual of acquaintances. ("This guy, Charlie somebody, told me a Yugo was *much* better than a Honda, and . . . ")

Send out lots of "Dear Friend" cards or notes. They can be very brief — little more than "I support X and hope you will, too." Include your (apparently original) signature. If you use a laser printer, use "Courier" or another typeface that makes them look as though you typed them. Typeset notes are least effective. Most "dear friends" do not typeset their notes to one another.

3. *Candidate statements included with ballot materials.* There is a word limit to these optional statements; they are written by the candidates (i.e., they have broad latitude in, uh, "accuracy"), and their printing costs are shared among those candidates who choose to have such statements distributed as part of the official ballot materials.

These are the statements that most voters read and are given the greatest credence by voters — in spite of the fact that they are candidates' "un-refereed" propaganda. This is something an outside activist can't do, except possibly in the "for" and "against" statements for a ballot

initiative. It's something over which outsiders have no control, but I include it in this list because of its importance. If your candidate is thinking of not including a ballot-packet statement, find another candidate.

4. *Directly distributed materials* — letters, brochures, leaflets. These are usually distributed by direct mail, but can also be distributed by hand, door to door. If you want to influence an issue or a candidate's campaign, you can do a lot without opening an office and a bank account. Simply write and distribute your own note, letter, leaflet, newsletter or tabloid.

Cover your neighborhood ("My family and I live nearby and feel this is so important that we have hand-delivered this to you . . . "). Distribute your publication to your business clients, if you dare.

In warm months, hand them to drivers at stoplights and bank drive-up queues. If it is a sufficiently sincere and effectively written item, you might risk putting it on automobile windshields (the risk is that recipients' irritation with the leaflet will act *against* your cause). I used to paper Silicon Valley with "windshield editions" of the *Silicon Gulch Gazette* and received *no* complaints, to my absolute amazement.

5. *Television advertising* can be powerful, but only for creating emotional bias — for and against. And it isn't within reach of average-income folks. Nuf sed.

6. *Radio advertising* runs a distant sixth, and is often considered almost useless except for costly drive-time ads. Paid radio advertising is not feasible for citizen activists. Call-ins to talk shows, however, can be really valuable.

7. *Signs and posters* are unanimously considered to be almost completely useless except for encouraging the candidate's volunteer campaign workers — who want to see them and want to display them. Ditto for lapel buttons. Junk! If you do put up political posters, it is far wiser to pay a political poster company to do it than to waste limited volunteer resource time.

Negative Campaigning Can Be Done With Integrity

It's a bitter pill to swallow, but the reason we see so much negative campaigning is because the pros know it works. The same holds true for avoiding making commitments. That sucks. All of us hate it — a lot of the politicians that do it, hate it — but it works.

One of my supporters, a successful pro of twenty years' experience, once told me, "Look, you have to realize that when you take positions on ten issues and somebody likes nine of them but opposes the tenth, they will vote against you because they've found something to dislike." That's why professional politicians simply don't make any commitments about anything except God, mother, and apple pie. Then the only thing remaining for them to say is to criticize their opponents.

Negative campaigning can be legitimate. Back to County Supervisor Atherton Anna Eshoo. She spends most of her time running for office; any office. When she ran for U.S. Representative, after years of screwing the county residents she was supposed to represent, I publicized her record — and believe me, it was negative, but legitimate, campaigning.

Just before the election, I made up a flyer. It was a 14-inch sheet of heavy-stock paper, had nothing but type on it — no pictures, no graphics, no color, no stars and stripes. It was folded and folded again into approximate letter size. The return address said "Jim Warren and Neighbors." The area to the left of the address label said: "We're from all political parties, and we're totally *fed up!* We're paying for this from our own, personal pockets. No party politics, no PACs, no outside special interests, no 'business contributions' — and no more patience!" That probably overcame the biggest single problem of direct-mail promotions — getting people to glance beyond the return address.

After the address fold, there was a series of boldface headlines, each followed by a brief explanatory paragraph. One headline said, "Eshoo Opposed Housing for Single Parents & Small Families." Another said, "Eshoo Overran County's Budget Limits," followed by "Budget Balancing? Eshoo Didn't Do It!"

Another said "Eshoo Dodged Ocean Dumping Problems," and still another said, "Eshoo Opposed Coastal Preservation Initiative." Each following paragraph detailed the headline's justification and how anyone could verify it.

At the end — very important — I listed the names and addresses of those supporting the flyer. No politicos; just fed-up neighbors.

It was a negative campaign, but it was completely justified. Eshoo had been campaigning as pro-environment, pro-housing, a single mother, and fiscally responsible. We simply publicized her actual public record that exposed the hypocrisy, and gave the means for verifying her statements and votes.

Her opponent won — by a tiny margin.

Computer Power For the People

Maintaining and sorting databases for direct mail and walking-order lists can best be done by machine. Computers have long been a powerful weapon for the wealthy and knowledgeable political parties. Now, personal computers are a "great equalizer."

Seek volunteers with personal computers and skills in database management and/or desktop publishing. Professional political campaign support companies often charge naive campaigners big bucks for list processing. You can save those costs and leverage your power using personal computers.

Get the list of registered voters on magnetic tape or floppy diskettes, from your local registrar of voters. It should cost very little; incumbents controlling such fees want them as low as you do.

The biggest problem with handouts and direct mail is getting the recipient to open the envelope. So eliminate the envelope. Print on a 14-inch piece of paper; fold it twice. Don't staple it.

Get the walking-order address sequences for streets in your district, again in machine-readable form, again at very low cost — from your main Post Office.

As needed, convert that data into a form that your personal computers can handle. If you can't do it, look for "media conversion services." Check around; prices vary widely.

Put that data and other public records (see below) into a personal computer database. Then, it's a "simple matter of programming" to produce a walking-order list of voters along each street, or a zip-sorted list needed for bulk-rate mailing labels. This is where computer-literate volunteers are worth their weight in gold.

Combining these lists with personalized letters or cards for direct mail can be a powerful campaign tool. But it can also be a waste if you don't do it properly. Here are some suggestions.

Designing Effective Flyers and Direct Distribution Pieces

- Something with an individual's return address, or from a group of named individuals, is a lot more effective than something from "the campaign to elect . . . " (but follow campaigning regulations).
- The biggest problem with handouts and direct mail is getting the recipient to open the envelope. So eliminate the envelope. Print on a 14-inch piece of paper; fold it twice. Don't staple it. Use paper stock heavy enough to meet postal requirements for a self-mailer.
- Increase circulation of flyers by printing the reminder "please post and circulate" near the top of the document.
- Turn the labeling, bundling, and sorting over to a professional mailing house. Do not waste volunteers' time on bulk mailings.
- Create brochures that espouse your cause in the form of a small set of key points that can be read at a glance (for example: "Eshoo Opposed Affordable Housing: 'There's not a problem; don't fix it!' "). Another exam-

ple that *WER* might use: "The articles in most magazines satisfy advertisers. The articles in *WER* satisfy readers." By the time somebody reads the headlines to determine whether or not they are interested in your document, they've read the statements you want them to read.

After each main point, *briefly* justify it or detail it, for those who give it more serious — or suspicious — consideration.

• Don't commit the most common sin of amateur desktop publishers. Keep it typographically simple. Don't use too many typefaces, too much boldface or italics or underline, too many fancy borders or illustrations.

• Make sure that everything you say is accurate. Nobody trusts political advertising. Make sure nobody can catch you in a lie. Give the reader information about how to verify your statements.

Public-Records Power

When I fought for equitable, community-oriented representation for mountain and rural residents and homeowners in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, I used the county's property-assessment lists, in electronic form — public records, rightfully so. When I wanted to address property-based voter action, the logical intersection of voter and assessor lists produced a powerful target list.

In California, all these records are open to the public under the state's potent Public Records Act and copies are available for no more than the direct cost of duplication. Make a copy of the act at your local law library. Keep it handy for obstinate bureaucrats.

Coupled with a faxmodem, the personal computer can be used as a powerful new tool for organizing quick community action.

Because the Public Records Act in California is vague on the issue, some repressive agencies respond to requests for copies, which they are required to furnish, by offering only paper copies, even when the records are maintained in electronic form and copies of large public-records bases are clearly of limited value in paper form. For instance, Palo Alto refused to release its city budget in machine-readable form, even though it was maintained on a computer.

Access to digital copies of digitally maintained public records, for no more than direct duplication costs, *must* be explicitly and clearly mandated in state and federal freedom-of-information and public-records legislation.

Privacy advocates, please note: God help us if and when those in power prohibit public access to such essential citizen-action information under the guise of "protecting privacy." The powers-that-be already have access to such data, and some don't want voters bothered by any disturbing information from non-incumbents.

Campaigns and Elections

For really practical, nuts-and-bolts information about effective campaigning, take a look at ***Campaigns and Elections****. It's been around for 14 years and is the trade journal for working campaign organizers. (It has also carried information detailing how to use computers in campaigns, for years — written for folks who know little about computers and want to know less; they just want to use 'em.)* —*JW*

Campaigns and Elections: $29.95/year (7 issues) from C&E, 1835 K Street NW #403, Washington, DC 20006; 202/331-3222.

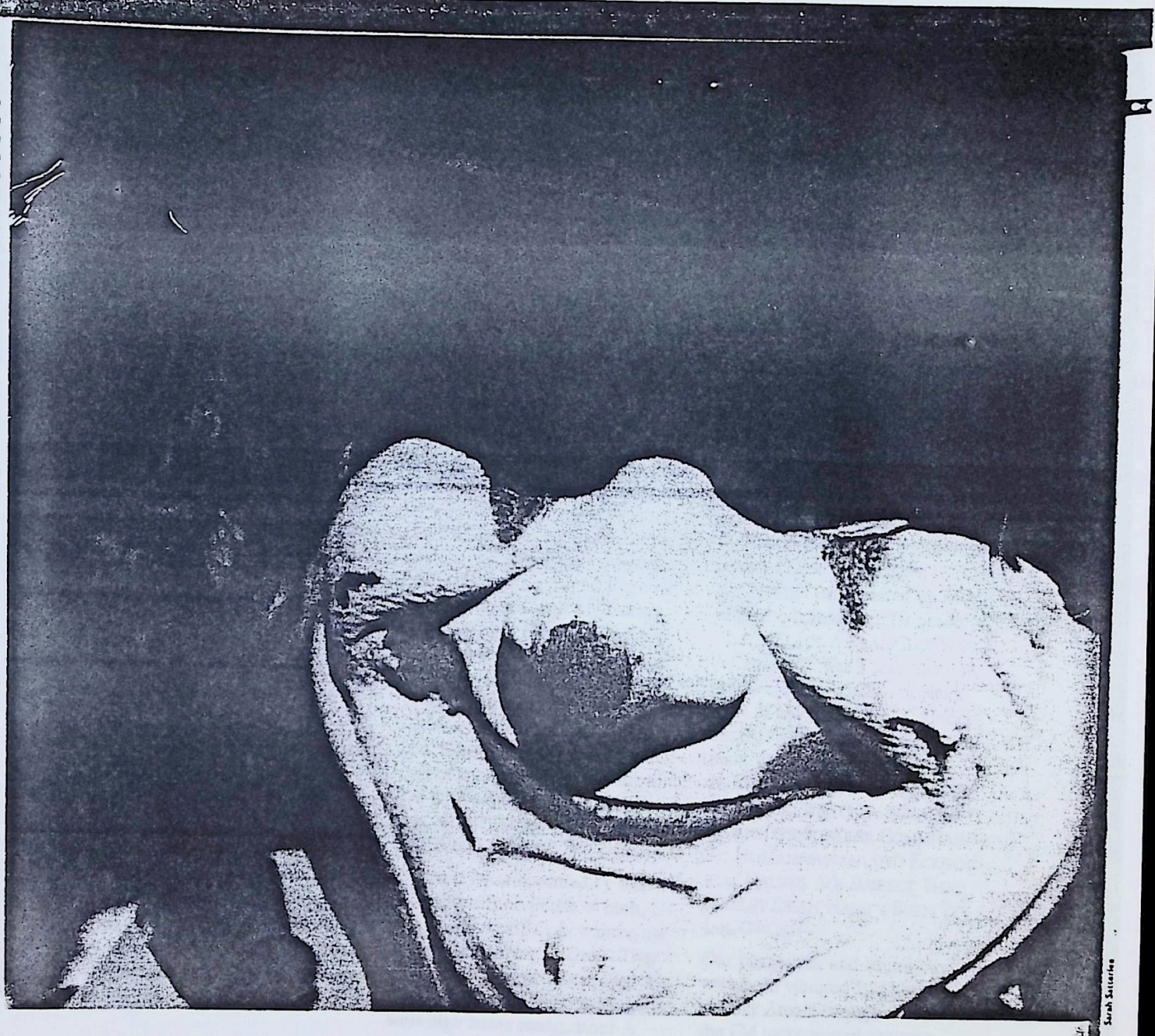
Community Power via Faxmodem

More and more people can now receive messages by fax. Many who have personal computers also have faxes. Coupled with a faxmodem, the personal computer can be used as a powerful new tool for organizing quick community action — often needed, as self-serving bureaucrats and arrogant elected officials seek to ram through policies before the people can defend themselves. Weekly community newspapers can be too slow and/or unwilling to provocatively publicize politicians' plans.

In the past year, my rural and mountain neighbors and I have begun organizing an increasingly broad and effective fax-plus-leaflets network. With a faxmodem plugged into the telephone port on my Mac, it's easy to draft a notice and fax it to computer-maintained lists of others interested in these issues, without ever having to touch hardcopy, or to feed it, over and over, through a manual fax.

And many of those who receive these fax alerts have low-cost copiers at home. Many have agreed to make copies of the notices when they arrive, and pass them along to neighbors or post them on local community bulletin boards.

The best "power to the people" is the power of information. ■



Sarah Satterlee

Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and . . . Wavy Gravy? Don't laugh. Or maybe laughing is appropriate. When the history of nonviolent political action is written, he deserves at least a footnote, for reminding us that humor is a political lubricant, particularly in volatile confrontations. Wavy, nee Hugh Romney, is best known as the inspirational leader of the Hog Farm (the long-lived quasipolitical commune) who first came to national attention as the fun-loving "Please Chief" at Woodstock (he condoned the use of cream pies and seltzer bottles for crowd control). Mr. Gravy furnishes new insights to those who believe levity is not out of place in democratic dissent.

The following piece is excerpted from Gravy's forthcoming book, Something Good for a Change.

—Howard Rheingold

What Makes Wavy

Run: A Poly-tickle Memoir

BY WAVY GRAVY

THERE I WAS, smack in the middle of 100 kids. My wife and I co-direct Camp Winnarainbow, a Circus and Performing Arts summer camp five miles north of Laytonville, California. The kids were about to embark on their morning warm-ups when my wife leaned out the office window and made the now-historic holler, "Dear, the B.C.A. just called, and they want you to run for city council."

B.C.A. stands for Berkeley Citizens Action, an organization slightly to the left of center in the Berkeley political spectrum. The B.C.A. had done a lot of great stuff over the years along the lines of rent control, excellent ecological guidelines, humane human services, and a deep cahoots with Ron Dellums, whom I consider the conscience of the United States Congress.

"Tell them I'll do it if I can run as a clown," I replied as I set off to teach my morning improv class.

Jahanara relayed my reply to the B.C.A. co-chair, Russell Bass. Jah asked if they were ready to endorse an avowed anarchist, pot-smoking, hippie clown. Three days later Russell arrived at Camp Winnarainbow; we filled out a forest of forms and drafted my election statement.

Time passed, camp continued, and it was like it never was . . . except for extremely existential phone calls with the City Clerk as to whether I would be listed on the ballot as: 1) Hugh Romney, 2) Hugh Romney/or aka Wavy Gravy, 3) Hugh "Wavy Gravy" Romney, or (my choice) 4) Wavy Gravy. This was a bit of an issue as my given name was unknown except to counterculture trivia buffs; so the calls continued till Wavy got first billing.

Our poly-tickle meetings took place at the home of Mark and Nancy Gorrel. Mark had run for the council seat for District Five in the previous election. He was extremely qualified and he was creamed three-to-one by Shirley Dean. My worthy opponent, Ms. Dean, has been a council member for 12 of the last 16 years and a citizen of my district for three decades. District Five includes a few scant blocks on the flats, then soars majestically to the crest of the Berkeley hills. Rare air and big bucks . . . and they want to keep it that way. I don't stand a chance.

I forget if I was bummed by this fact, relieved, or a little of both. I saw clearly why B.C.A. wanted me to run against Shirley Dean. They had tried the regular channels, and were wiped out. Why not a clown with high name recognition? A chance to shake up Shirley and have a little fun.

By the end of the first meeting our team was in place. I had a campaign manager, Pat McClintock, with deep tracks in Berkeley politics. Dr. Larry Brilliant (Doc Soup) became campaign fundraiser. He provided the necessary dead presidents to grease the campaign trail. Also on the Gravy train were Winnarainbow alumni Mark Portman and Sarah Satterlee, and treasurer Spencer Koffman. I'd never had a treasurer before.

The next day we ordered hundreds of red rubber noses to give out in exchange for campaign contributions, and the slogans wrote themselves: "PICK YOUR NOSE," "JUST SAY NOSE," etc. I pasted up and printed our first flyer. Its headline, "LET'S ELECT A REAL CLOWN FOR A CHANGE," was a real attention grabber, above a photo of yours truly in full clown regalia. Underneath, I put my full election statement and a plea for fun, funds, and volunteers. To bottom things off, in bold-face type: MR. GRAVY HAS A TWENTY-YEAR COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN AND ECOLOGICAL CAUSES. WE SUSPECT THAT SHIRLEY DEAN HASN'T BEEN TO JAIL ONCE."

Our buzzwords and sound bites were both vibrated and bitten. First the Bay Area newspapers, then the FM jocks started chatting up the campaign.

At the same time, we were getting pressure from the straight Left to tone down the fun and play up my SERIOUS side. It was suggested that I drop this clown thing altogether. Russell Bass of the B.C.A. agreed. I

Sarah Satterlee

decided then and there to run as an independent. That way people and organizations could endorse me — but not have to wear my nose.

To let the people know there was life beyond Shirley Dean, we decided to focus on voter registration; each day I set up my card table somewhere in the district, signed people up, and passed out noses.

Through my friend at Channel 7, Michael Vosse, we set up an ABC-affiliate interview at my voter registration table, and political publicist Rachael Richmond got me a major interview with the *San Francisco Examiner*.

On October 3, I had my first interview with Ron Dellums' staff to discuss the possibility of endorsement by the congressman. Most of the staffers were familiar with my use of humor and satire to evoke political change. It took two meetings and a lot of soul-searching to win the Dellums staff.

I got endorsed by Ram Dass, the meditator, and Rusty Schweickart, the astronaut. From innerspace to outerspace, I covered the waterfront. Rachael set up a slew of interviews — including Jane Gross of *The New York Times*.

Wavy's campaign poster started out as a large (6x6 ft.) painting by Ruby Lee; it then announced his 50th birthday party, with performers' names where the type is now.

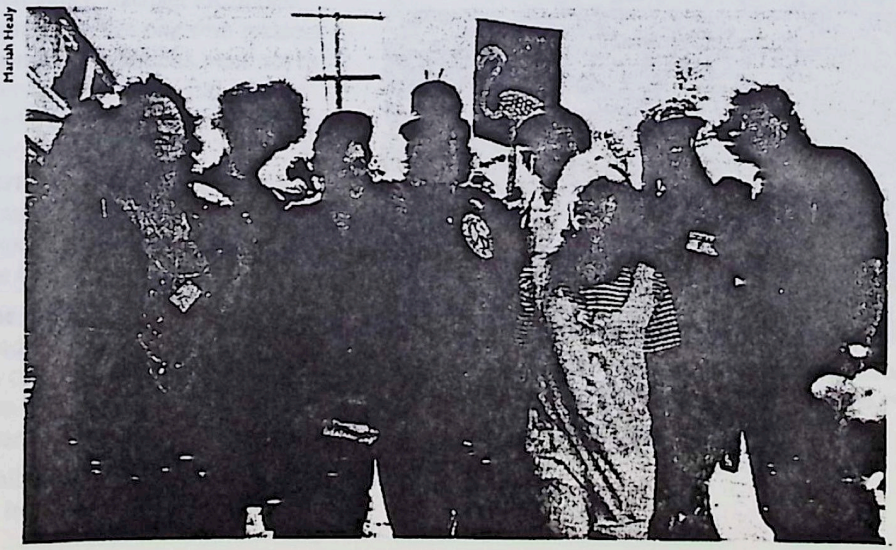
I did almost all my interviews atop Indian Rock . . . which is just that: a giant rock, once frequented by indigenous people . . . smack in the middle of my district. The view is spectacular. Not only can you get a good grasp on the whereabouts of my constituency, but of everybody else in the Bay Area. I wanted to project my sense of the interconnectedness that goes out far beyond the borders of District Five. I spoke sincerely of my commitment toward helping the homeless, not only in Berkeley, but nationally, and over many years. The Press all wanted to talk about Woodstock.

Most of the reporters were aware that I was not completely without political portfolio, having run a pig for the presidency in 1968. In 1972 we ran a rock for that high office, with a roll for vice president. Then along came Nobody, and Nobody is still perfect. From 1976 to the present, I've continued to work for Nobody (cuz Nobody is in Washington working for me).

I do spoof presidential politics, but (quoting *The New York Times* quoting me), "Grass-roots representational politics is another thing. It's sacred. Not only would I be compelled to show up at every meeting. I'd be compelled to do a very good job."

The *Times* ran a quarter-page article on October 18. (They called me "an endearing longshot.") Suddenly I was everywhere. I got a call from a friend who heard about it on a country & western station in Nebraska. It was out of control.

Two weeks before the election we



Mariah Healy

Wavy with part of the Gravy 90 Campaign Committee. (Left to right: Rachael Richmond, Pat McClintock, Eileen Hoyt, Larry Brilliant, Barbara Cromarty, Sarah Satterlee, Eric Taylor.)

finally produced our legendary lawn signs. Designed by R. We Really, leading exponent of ART CAN BE FUN, the flamingo factory was a wonder to behold. Mr. Really and countless campaign coworkers spat out hot-pink flamingos that would vanish like hotcakes later that night.

October 23: endless European interviews, first *The Economist*, then *The Observer*, then (would you believe) German radio. Relentless German radio. While I was having those last remaining strands of sanity siphoned off, the Wavy Gravy Political Machine marched on.

Pat pulled together a major mailing using postcard reductions of my birthday poster, politically abridged and in full color. On the flip side was my election statement and an invite to my Ice Cream Social at Live Oak Park on Sunday, the 28th.

KEN KESEY had called and signified he'd show up on Halloween with Son of Further and the whole shootin' match to help me campaign for City Council. I knew he had a couple of book fairs in the area, you understand, so I asked what I could do to help him plug his new books. He said not to mention them at all . . .

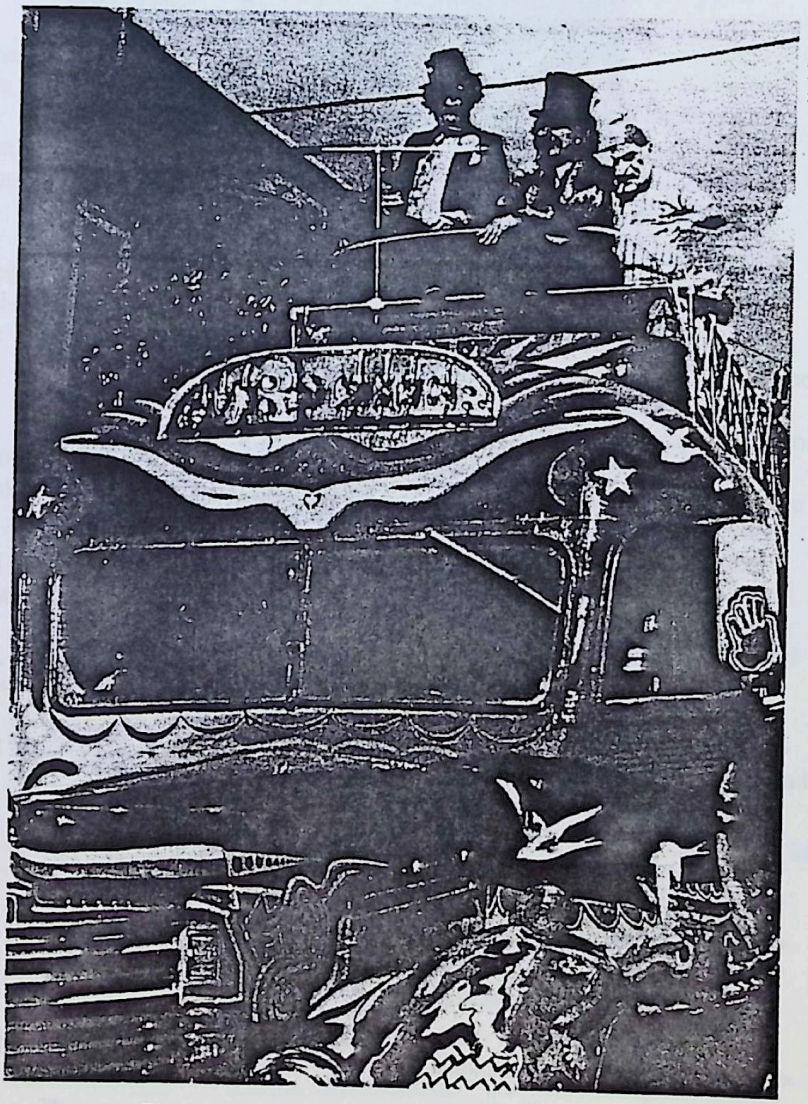
But would he show up? *Never trust a prankster.* I must prepare for any eventuality. Rachael Richmond jumped on this one with reckless abandon. Invitations went out to every piece of print and electric media on the hemisphere: COME AND RIDE THE GRAVY TRAIN. A HISTORICAL REUNION . . . like the campaign trains of yore. She invoked Roosevelt, Kennedy, and the Grateful Dead.

The press didn't need much persuading, and Kesey & Co. showed up ON TIME. I immediately went into deep shock and the rest of the afternoon was a bit of a blur.

While I waxed psychedelic with Mr. K. from atop Further II, Rachael started packing the press into an assortment of vehicles. We wobbled our way out into the afternoon traffic. Motorists pulled over and stared as we pitched anchor at Peet's Coffee, Black Oak Books, and the Juice Bar Collective. Get out and press flesh.

A few fast photo ops and we're down the road again, this time stopping at Pegasus Books and the headwaters of Solano Avenue. Then into the Solano Tunnel and a near-decapitation, then left on Spruce and into Shirley Dean country.

All the while the P.A. was blasting "Hit The Road Jack," and we be singin along with Ray. We be shakin our rattles, our booties, and the surrounding populace, who stared dumbfounded out the picture windows of their million-dollar homes at this full-scale invasion of their avenues. The bus had to shift down



Mark Portman

The return of Further: the Pranksters hit Berkeley 20 years after their culture-crunching run across America.

into compound low to accommodate the climb up, up, up, into the Berkeley Hills. Further II's engine was heating up dangerously. It became necessary to abort my somewhat misguided plot to pretend to dose the Berkeley water supply, which lies at the top of the hill.

I must say, I enjoyed hearing Kesey say all those nice things about me to the assembled media. Without Clown White, I'm still not blushproof, even on the evening news. We got major time on all the locals, and seven solid minutes of CNN.

But the all-time media thrill for me was to end up in LIVING COLOR on the BUS with KESEY on the FRONT PAGE of the *San Francisco Examiner.* Kesey must of cut loose a real hooter cuz I am frozen forever in total comic crack-up. What an honor it was to spend Friday the 1st peeping out of a thousand newspaper vending boxes . . . peering through the Plexiglas and filling all who look back with the possibility that this campaigning stuff could be FUN! That day we painted some real rainbows on an otherwise gray political landscape.

Pat squeezed in one last mass mailing, containing the *Times* article and other tidbits, ie: endorsements by Ron Dellums, the East Bay Greens, the Berkeley City Workers, Berkeley Citizens Union and the League of Conservation Voters. (We reprinted one from the *Bay Guardian* which included the "F" word, a first for campaign literature. My endorsement included a line from my interview, "If anyone is going to fuck with rent control they're going to have to go over the top of me." I can't believe I actually said that.)

My campaign's next gift to Berkeley politics was my Ice Cream Social, an afternoon of rock and roll, short speeches, and free Ben & Jerry's ice cream, on the last Sunday before election day. It went off as good as it gets. From noon till dusk by the peace wall in Martin Luther King, Jr., Park, just across the street from the old City Hall. Sunshine, sweet music, booths for good causes like Forests Forever, Big Green, Recycling, Rent Control, better schools, etc. This was a real community/family event, with special focus on the kids. We had juggling workshops, face painting, and a whole lotta clowns. It was an ideal nonthreatening afternoon for local folks to come and check me out. Pat brought in a medicine woman to bless the day and I talked about how I would like to introduce stuff like aikido and circus skills into the public schools. I had stated earlier that I would throw a pie in the face of any politician who went over five minutes. To show I meant business, I displayed two chocolate creams stage left. This was an extremely effective method of keeping things moving along, and I plan to institute it often in my daily life.

Mariah Healy

The clowndidate in deep merriment with old-time coconspirator Ken Kesey.

The next morning was the "Great Debate" at 7 A.M. on Pacifica Radio, KPFA, with Chris Welsh moderating. Shirley showed up with her husband, Dan, who is a student advisor in the Berkeley school system. I brought both my noses and a kazoo for back-up. Shirley was focused like a laser. She said she wanted to FIX Berkeley, as if the city were a giant cat. Potholes, sewers, and speeders are Shirley's main slice. I suggested she think of those potholes as reverse speed bumps, and spend more money dealing with the homeless and the youth . . . and . . . and . . . you've got to remember it was early for clowns and my mind hadn't yet kicked in.

"I've got it, I've got it! A chicken in every pothole . . . that's it!" And then I considered the legions of outraged animal rights activists on my case . . . "Make that 'a *rubber* chicken in every pothole.'"

HOLY SHIT! Shirley Dean just laughed out loud . . . on the radio.

This is another historic moment in Berkeley politics. Chris and I are struck dumb, but not Shirley! She is going on about this rubber chicken that was given to her by the B.C.A. at a City Council meeting. It was just beautiful to watch this extremely inhibited woman open up like that.

In the spirit of the moment Chris encouraged Ms. Dean to reach over "and give Mr. Gravy's rubber clown nose a little squeak." Shirley Dean surrendered to the spontaneity of the moment and gave my proboscis one hell of a squeeze . . . and THE NOSE REFUSED TO SQUEAK and it was trauma time on Pacifica. I tried it myself and it worked perfectly, which didn't help anything. All her defenses were back in place and it was back to politics as usual.

Voting was something of a Zen exercise. The ballot book was a voluminous tome on endless bills and initiatives. Mine was a doorhanger provided by the B.C.A. and featuring for City Council in District Five, one Hugh "Wavy Gravy" Romney. What a rush it was to plunge into the bin of official decision and cast a ballot in favor of FUN.

The rest is History. Shirley Dean got well over four thousand votes and I got just over two thousand. Such a relief! Such a disappointment! I knew from the get-go that it would take an act of Divine Intervention for me to win this election, but there is a major portion of this sentient dude that lives for such opportunities. It's what makes Wavy run.

Sure, I could of done it different . . . put my clown in a closet and dressed up in straight clothing. I could of compromised my essence, and swallowed my soul. I could stop bullshitting right now!

What we did was tickle the political fancy of a nation bored shitless with the usual bill of fare. That tickle rippled through Europe and ended up on Russian TV, where it was reported that in the United States of America there was a "just and serious" clown running for public office. "Only in California," chortled the commentator.

But, after all, our fair State has spawned an actor president, a tap-dancing congressman, and just the other day I read that Sonny Bono's running for the United States Senate.

I may not be out of this yet. ■

How I Became a Clown

I called Wavy to ask him how he became a clown and used my answering machine to record his answer. Here it is. —Sarah Satterlee

YOU have Gravy in your device, remembering how I first became a clown. I was recovering from my third spinal fusion and these docs read about me in the Oakland Trib as some kind of social-worker hippie. They came by the house and said how would I like to come and cheer kids up and I thought "who's going to cheer me up?" but "well, it's something to do." So I said, "Okay, I'll give it a shot." On the way out the door somebody handed me

Jeffrey Dooley

Wavy demonstrating principles of levity as applied to nonviolent protest.

BY GEETA DARDICK

CONFESSIONS of an Access Junkie

IN 1963 I FELL IN LOVE WITH SAM DARDICK, A MAN WHO HAPPENED TO HAVE A DISABILITY. After I announced my engagement to Sam, some narrow-minded "friends" tried to convince me that I shouldn't choose a wheelchair user for a husband, but I ignored their negative comments. To me, Sam Dardick was a charming and sexy guy, and the fact that he'd had polio as a kid didn't dampen my ardor for him.

Still, during the early years of our marriage, when we lived in St. Louis, Missouri, Sam's wheelchair proved a problem for both of us. We'd try to rent an apartment, and find that 100 percent of them had stairs; we'd go to the movies: stairs again. We'd plan to take the bus . . . more stairs. It soon became obvious that architects, builders, and designers did not take Sam's and my needs into consideration (ironic, as Sam was a graduate of Washington University School of Architecture).

Photographs by Geeta Dardick

The author with her husband, Sam Dardick.

Citizens elect representatives who make laws that reflect the will and needs of the citizens. That's how democracy is supposed to work. But knowing how to use the law and how to make sure it is enforced has a lot more to do with the way people really live. That was one clear lesson from the Civil Rights movement.

Geeta Dardick, a longtime WER *reader and contributor from the Sierra Nevada foothills, sent us this piece. Right-of-access is a civil right; Dardick shows us why and tells how to help fight for it.*
—Howard Rheingold

I felt extremely annoyed every time we encountered an architectural barrier, but I had no way to vent my anger. There weren't any disability laws in Missouri at that time. All I could do was stuff my feelings about the lack of wheelchair access and move on with my life.

By 1969 we had three children, and a townhouse with an elevator in it. We were quite active in the Black Civil Rights movement, and gave wild, integrated parties, where I'd stand under the elevator and let it come down on my head, much to the shock of the guests who didn't realize the elevator had a sensor in it. We never considered joining a Disability Rights movement, because nothing like that existed.

In 1970, we gave up our urban lifestyle. We drove from Spain to India in a VW bus, and stayed there for two years. When we returned to the US, we bought land on the San Juan Ridge in Nevada County, California, and became back-to-the-land farmers. Now I worried about the simple things in life, like keeping the woodstove burning so the cabin would be warm enough for the whole-wheat bread to rise. Access seemed irrelevant, as we rarely left our land.

MY FEELINGS ABOUT ACcessibility issues remained dormant for many years; then one sunny day, in the spring of 1984, like Rip Van Winkle, I woke up. Sam and I were celebrating his birthday by lunching together at the Posh Nosh Restaurant in Nevada City. After we paid for our beers and pastrami-on-rye sandwiches, Sam suddenly felt an urgent call of nature.

He wheeled his wheelchair over to the bathroom and discovered that the door was two feet wide. His wheelchair measured two and one-half feet wide. There was no way his chair was going to pass through that door.

Sam wheeled back to our table, located about 20 feet from the bathroom door. Without telling me what he intended to do, Sam jumped out of his wheelchair, and dropped himself onto the floor of the restaurant. And then he started crawling rapidly toward the bathroom door.

Paraplegics like Sam can use their arms, but not their legs. Sam's crawl was a two-handed movement in which he dragged himself across the room, like a caterpillar. I sat there watching him in disbelief. Here was the man who was my lover, my hus-

A brief analysis of the Americans With Disabilities Act

A demonstration in San Francisco. The disabled activists have arrived at City Hall, only to be stopped by a typical barrier — steps.

band, the father of my three children, the president of the San Juan Ridge School Board, a guy with graduate degrees in architecture and city planning, a guy who had been Deputy Director of the St. Louis Model Cities program, a guy who was the fastest goat milker on the planet: here he was, being forced to crawl across the floor of the Posh Nosh Restaurant to use the bathroom. As I watched Sam crawling, I pledged that I was going to do something, to help make sure that neither my husband nor anyone else would be forced to crawl to a bathroom again.

The following day I started making phone calls. I found out that California already had laws requiring wheelchair accessibility. I also found out that Sam and I could join a state-sponsored program, called the Community Access Network (CAN), which would teach us the state's access codes, and then send us back into Nevada County to enforce the codes.

That summer, I trained as a CAN volunteer; from that moment on, I became an access cop, with my evil eye turned on the county's innumerable inaccessible structures (my all-time favorite was the new supermarket constructed without any wheelchair-accessible checkout stands). Rather than act alone, Sam and I networked with persons from all disability groups (deaf, blind, wheelchair, crutches) and formed a broad-based local access committee to raise community awareness of the need for accessibility and to police new construction projects.

During the next few years, Sam and I volunteered thousands of hours for disability causes throughout California. We marched for access to public transportation in San Francisco, testified for accessible apartments in Sacramento, busted inaccessible city-council meetings in Nevada City, and started an Independent Living Center called FREED in Grass Valley. Every victory was celebrated with gusto, but there was always one caveat. We realized that the state of California, with its progressive legislation promoting architectural accessibility, was more advanced on disability issues than most other states. Would the fight for accessibility have to be fought over and over again in every state in the nation? Wasn't there ever going to be a national disability policy?

WE DIDN'T HAVE LONG to wait. Back in 1984, at about the same time that Sam was crawling to the bathroom at the Posh Nosh, President Ronald Reagan directed the National Council on the Handicapped (a small group of Reagan appointees) to prepare a special report. This paper would present legislative recommendations for enhancing the productivity and quality of life of Americans with disabilities.

The council's report, submitted to President Reagan in 1986, was entitled *Toward Independence*, and it was much more hard-hitting than might have been expected. It recommended "enactment of a comprehensive law requiring equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, with broad coverage and setting clear, consistent, and enforceable standards prohibiting discrimination on the basis of handicap." That bold recommendation was the seed that resulted in the development of legislation for an Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA), the first national civil-rights bill for people with disabilities.

Passage of disability legislation required the support of congressmen and senators throughout the country. In 1988, when the first version of the ADA was introduced into Congress, supporters of the bill felt that most elected officials were not truly aware of the need for comprehensive civil-rights coverage for disabled people. To raise awareness of the existing discrimination, congressman Major Owens appointed a task force to travel around the country and take testimony from people with disabilities. Owens asked Justin Dart, a wheelchair user with extensive experience in business and government, to chair the task force.

Throughout 1988 and 1989, Justin Dart conducted 63 public forums in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico, taking testimony from more than 7,000 individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates, and service providers. When the task force came to Northern California, Sam and I drove the seven-hour round trip from Nevada County to Oakland to give our testimony. Sam spoke about facing job discrimination while a graduate student at UC Berkeley in 1959. (He had won a contest guaranteeing him a summer position with the city of Berkeley, but lost the job to another student. The reason: the city officials refused to hire a student who couldn't walk.)

I spoke about the discrimination I had experienced as the non-disabled partner of a wheelchair user. "When a restaurant, theater, store, or library has no access ramps," I said, "it affects the entire family, not just the person with the disability."

The task force collected 5,000 specific examples of discrimination, which helped to prove the need for the passage of the ADA. Then we all started lobbying every member of the Senate and House of Representatives, to make sure they voted for the ADA.

Opposition to the ADA, from business and transportation interests, forced disability leaders to wheel and deal. The right to universal health-insurance coverage was bartered away in order to receive support for the bill from some key legislators. After a great deal of behind-the-scenes negotiation, the ADA passed the House of Representatives 377-28 and the Senate 91-6, with most important segments still intact.

Sam and I flew to Washington, DC, to watch President Bush sign the bill on July 26, 1990. Seated on the lawn of the White House amidst 2,000 persons with disabilities (many of whom were weeping with joy), I felt privileged to witness such an historic event.

When President Bush gave his speech, which was simultaneously interpreted into sign language, he compared the discrimination against disabled people to the Berlin Wall. "Today I am going to take a sledgehammer to another wall," he crowed. "Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down."

THE ADA IS A VERY comprehensive piece of legislation. The regulations of the ADA (which went into effect on January 26, 1991) will eliminate many of the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

All "public accommodations," such as restaurants, hotels, medical offices, and retail stores, will need to be built with full accessibility. (Adding accessibility to a new structure increases the total cost by one percent or less.) Typical accessibility features include ramps, bathrooms with ample space for wheelchairs to turn around, and

Judy Heumann, who runs the World Institute on Disability, cheers at a San Francisco rally for the right to have access to public transportation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To receive more specific information about the contents of the ADA and how you can help implement this important law, contact the following organizations:

Office on the Americans with Disabilities Act
Civil Rights Division,
United States Department of Justice
P. O. Box 66118, Washington, DC 20035-6118.
202/514-0301 (voice);
202/514-0381 (TDD).

Community Action Network
California State Department of Rehabilitation.
916/445-8638.

President's Committee for Employment of People With Disabilities
111 20th Street NW,
Washington, DC 20210.
202/653-5044 (voice);
202/653-5050 (TDD).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street NW,
Washington, DC 20507.
800/669-EEOC (voice);
800/800-3302 (TDD).

Department of Transportation
400 7th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20590.
202/366-9305 (voice);
202/755-7687 (TDD).

The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
2212 6th Street,
Berkeley, CA 94710.
800/466-4ADA (voice and TDD).

lightweight doors that are easy to open.

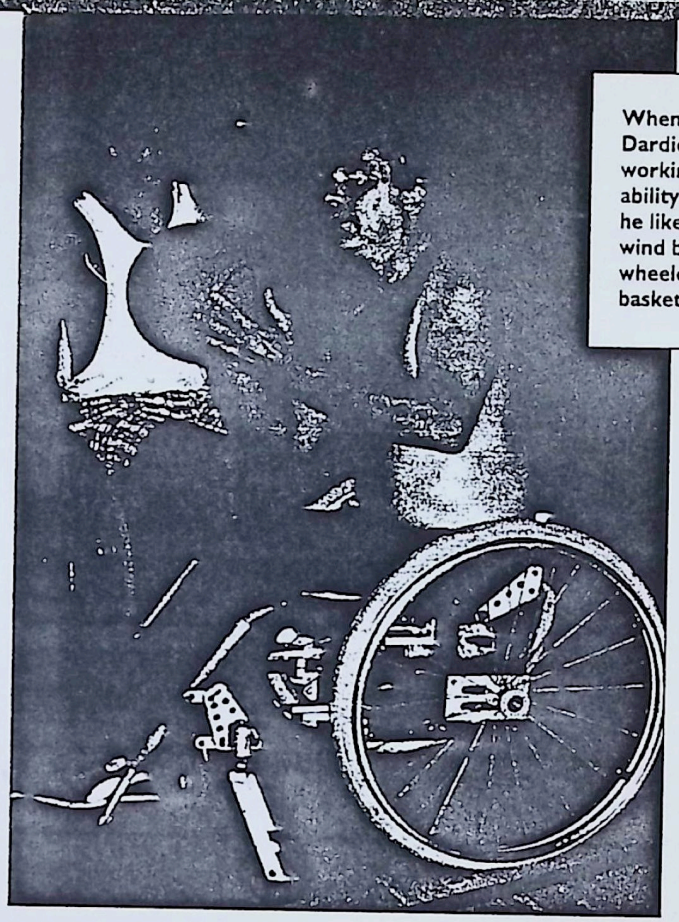
Businesses that decide to remodel will have to make the remodeled area accessible, as well as the path of travel to the remodeled area. In existing buildings, inaccessible features must be eliminated if such changes are "readily achievable" without much difficulty or expense. An example would be placing a ramp over one or two steps leading into a store or office.

Businesses must provide auxiliary aids to enable a person with a disability to use available materials and services. For example, any video presentations about products would need to be closed-captioned for the deaf, and brochures would need large print so that those with low vision could read them. Another example: providing special pens with large, spongy handles that are easy to hold: helpful for many people with arthritis.

The ADA also makes major changes in employment criteria. Under the ADA, an employer cannot refuse to hire a qualified applicant with a disability, just because of the person's disability. However, an employer does not have to give preference to a qualified applicant with a disability over other applicants.

Also, an employer must make "reasonable accommodations" for a person with a disability so they can perform their job. This might mean putting an amplifier on a telephone, lowering a desk, or establishing a flexible work schedule. And in new or remodeled facilities, all employee areas including sales areas and service areas must be made fully accessible. However, if the accommodations would impose an "undue hardship" (be too costly), they will not be required.

There are many incentives written into the law to encourage businesses to comply with the ADA. Businesses can receive tax deductions of up to $15,000 for the removal of architectural barriers (for example, if it costs $12,000 to replace stairs with a ramp, the entire amount is tax-deductible).



When Sam Dardick isn't working on disability issues, he likes to unwind by playing wheelchair basketball.

Businesses can receive tax credits equal to 50 percent of all costs of meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing those costs are over $250 and under $10,250. If (for instance) you hired a sign-language interpreter as a consultant to be present for the signing of contracts with deaf buyers, or if you made a workstation accessible for an employee who used a wheelchair, half of the cost could be deducted.

Public services also come under the umbrella of the ADA. All new public buildings and all new buses and rail vehicles must be accessible. By 1993, telephone companies must provide telecommunications relay services for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals, 24 hours a day.

OF COURSE, PASSING A law is only a first step to full equality. Implementation is the second step, and just as important. Congressman Steny Hoyer put it most succinctly when he said, "Passing ADA was incredibly historic. Now every day we must fight to make sure that the words in the law, the words on the White House lawn, the words in the House and the words in the Senate become reality for 43 million Americans with disabilities and millions more around the world who are looking to American leadership for the rights of the disabled."

Over the next ten years, the ADA will improve the lives of Americans with disabilities and their family members. Many businesses are already working to comply with the law, but others will try to ignore it. There will be thousands of civil suits as people with disabilities take public and private entities who break the law to court. As for the Posh Nosh Restaurant: they still don't have to have an accessible bathroom, as their building was built before any laws (California or federal) went into effect. That's why Sam and I never went there again. We try not to patronize places that don't provide accessibility. Like who wants a pastrami-on-rye sandwich, anyway?

PART FOUR:

THINGS WORTH THE TROUBLE

Winning The Peace

BY HIS ACTIONS in recent months, Saddam Hussein has proved to the world that he is a malevolent man. (The Kurds on whom he dropped poison gas, of course, knew this years ago.) But the U.S.' willingness to confront Iraq hardly sprang just from an altruistic desire to liberate Kuwait: a half-million troops would not have been sent if Kuwait merely grew broccoli.

This has been cast as a war between good and evil, but it was also a war about oil — who controls it and how much it will cost. It was both a moral war and a resource war; a war against Hussein and a war *for* energy. After the war, the energy issues remain. Will this war strengthen America's resolve to reduce its dependence on foreign oil? Or will it, ironically, have the opposite effect? Having won the war, can we win the peace?

For decades, one of the veiled, unstated principles of U.S. energy policy has been: "Maintain access to Middle Eastern oil, regardless of economic, environmental, political, or military costs." But as this war demonstrated, the true costs of a barrel of Persian Gulf crude are far larger than its nominal price. Since this is unlikely to change, it seems reasonable to ask: in the decades to come, are our strategic and economic interests best served by preserving access to Persian Gulf oil — or by eliminating our need for it? Whatever the rationales for this war, we don't need to depend on oil from the Gulf — and it's cheaper not to.

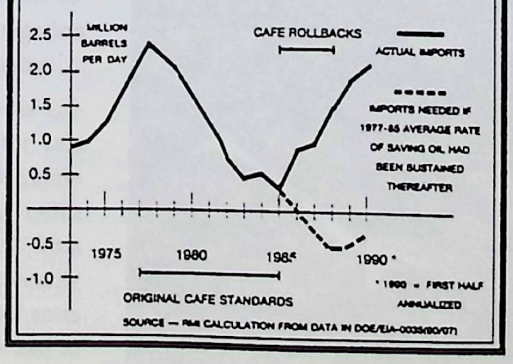
More simply, did we put our kids in tanks because we didn't put them in efficient cars? The answer is yes. Americans wouldn't have needed *any* oil from the Persian Gulf after 1985 if we'd simply kept on saving oil as quickly as we did for the previous nine years (graph 1).

Even now, we could still roll back the oil dependence that perpetually holds our foreign policy hostage and distorts other U.S. priorities in the Middle East. We could eliminate all Gulf imports by using only an eighth less oil.

For example, improving America's 19-mile-per-gallon household-vehicle fleet (graph 2) by three miles per gallon would replace U.S. imports of oil from Iraq and Kuwait. Another nine miles per gallon would end the need for any oil from the Persian Gulf and, according to the Department of Energy, would cut the cost of driving to well below pre-war levels without sacrificing performance.

Graph 1

Net U.S. Imports of Oil from the Persian Gulf



The New York Times published a slightly different version of this piece six weeks before the Gulf War broke out. Amory and Hunter Lovins are the founders of the respected and sassy Rocky Mountain Institute.
—T. Baldwin

BY AMORY B. LOVINS
AND HUNTER L. LOVINS

The Reagan Administration doubled 1985 oil imports from the Gulf when it rolled back light-vehicle efficiency standards. Today's new cars average 29 miles per gallon. Yet ten manufacturers have built and tested attractive, low-pollution prototype cars that get 67 to 138 miles per gallon. Better design and stronger materials make some of these safer than today's cars, as well as more nimble and peppy.

And efficiency needn't mean smallness: only 4 percent of past car-efficiency gains came from downsizing. Some of the prototype cars comfortably hold four or five passengers, and two of them are said to cost nothing extra to build.

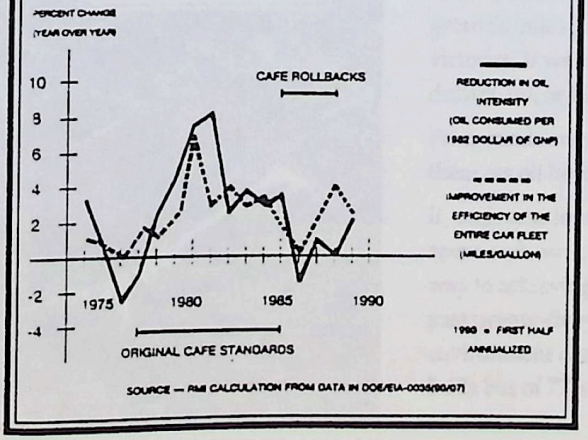
Many other oil savings can help. Boeing's new 777 jet will use about half the fuel per seat of a 727. Technical refinements can save most of the fuel used by heavy trucks, buses, ships, and industry. Insulation, weatherstripping, and simple hot-water savings can displace most of the oil used in buildings. Superwindows that retain heat in winter and reject it in summer could save each year up to twice as much fuel as we get from Alaska.

In all, we know how to run the present U.S. economy on one-fifth the oil we are now using, and the cost of saving each barrel would be less than $5. Even achieving just 15 percent of that potential oil saving would displace all the oil we've been importing from the Gulf. Doing that requires only a small additional step. Since 1973, we've reduced our oil use per dollar of gross national product four and a half times as much as we'd need to reduce it today in order to eliminate all Gulf imports.

How can we promote fuel efficiency? Higher gasoline taxes are a weak incentive to buy an efficient car, because gasoline costs five times less than the non-fuel costs of owning and running a car. And since the often higher purchase price of an efficient car roughly cancels out the lower gasoline bills, the total cost per mile for 20- and 60-mile-per-gallon cars is about the same.

Graph 2

More Efficient Cars — The Key to National Oil Savings



But the 40-mile-per-gallon difference, for cars and light trucks, represents more than twice America's imports from the Gulf. If the security and environmental costs of inefficient cars had to

Did we put our kids in tanks because we didn't put them in efficient cars? The answer is yes.

be paid up front, buyers would choose more wisely. The best way is "feebates": when you register a new car, you pay a fee or get a rebate; which and how big depends on its efficiency. The fees pay for the rebates.

Rebates for efficient cars should ideally be based on the difference in efficiency between your new car and the old one — which you'd scrap, thus getting the most inefficient, dirtiest cars off the road first. That's good for Detroit, for the poor (who disproportionately own such cars and served in the Gulf forces), for the environment, and for displacing Gulf oil sooner.

The California legislature recently approved car feebates by a margin of seven to one (outgoing governor George Deukmejian vetoed the bill, but his successor, Pete Wilson, is expected to sign it later this year). Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, and several other states are weighing feebates. Feebates are also being considered for new buildings in California, Massachusetts, Iowa, and the four northwest states, and could be applied to trucks, aircraft, appliances, and other energy-consuming goods. Unlike miles-per-gallon standards, feebates reward maximum performance and encourage businesses to bring superefficient models to market quickly. Standards *plus* feebates are better still.

Energy efficiency is also the key to the decades-long transition to nondepleting, uninterruptible energy sources. Government studies confirm that sun, wind, water, geothermal heat, and farm and forestry wastes can cost-effectively provide, within forty years, 50 to 70 percent as much energy as America uses today. Efficiency would raise that share and buy the time needed for graceful conversion.

As we have seen in recent months, the military alternative to efficiency isn't cheap. Gulf jitters added more than $40 billion a year to U.S. oil imports. Counting military costs, Gulf oil in late 1990 cost over $100 a barrel.

The more than $20 billion net cost of U.S. forces in the Gulf just from August through December 1990, if spent instead on efficient use of oil, could displace all the oil now imported from the Gulf. It could also create jobs and wealth, improve America's trade balance, stretch domestic reserves, clean urban air, cut acid rain and global warming, and help the poor at home and abroad.

In 1989, the Pentagon used about 38 percent as much oil as the U.S. imported from Saudi Arabia, and estimated that its consumption would double or triple in a war. An M-1 tank gets 0.58 miles per gallon. An oil-fired aircraft carrier gets 17 feet per gallon. Despite military victories, if we continue on our present energy course, no good long-term outcome — in dollars, oil, or blood — is in sight.

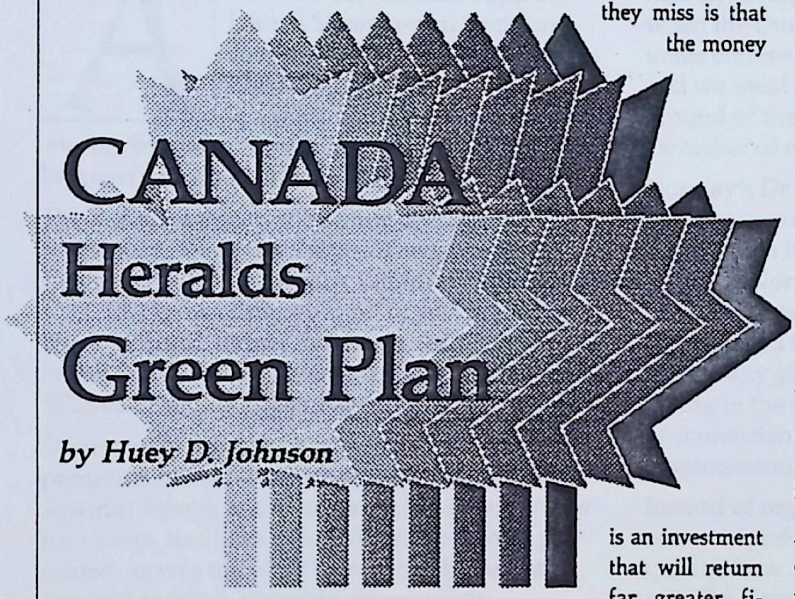
Despite military victories, if we continue on our present energy course, no good long-term outcome — in dollars, oil, or blood — is in sight.

From inside an efficient car, however, the Gulf looks very different. From inside enough of them, its oil becomes irrelevant.

If, each year for the next ten, America invested as much money in energy efficiency as it spent each week waging the Gulf war, by the turn of the century we would be well on our way to achieving sustainable energy independence — something we have not had for the past twenty-five years. National security, peacetime jobs in a competitive economy, and the environment demand immediate mobilization — not of tanks but of efficient cars, not of B-52s but of 777s, and not of naval guns but of caulking guns.

CANADA Heralds Green Plan

by Huey D. Johnson



CANADA'S ANNOUNCEMENT in December 1990 of a comprehensive plan to invest $3 billion in its environmental recovery is a shout of joy for the world. The Green Plan for a healthy environment is, I believe, the most complete, big-picture strategy ever proposed by any nation. With it, Canada moves its ship of state from a dangerous, issue-by-issue, leak-patching practice to rebuilding the nation for a safe 1,000-year voyage. Other nations, including the U.S., will follow.

Critics are already grousing about the cost of this plan (which is by no means enough). What they miss is that the money is an investment that will return far greater financial rewards to the nation. If the U.S. were to develop a similar environmental and economic plan, our government would need to reallocate at least 1 percent of its military budget, or $35 billion a year. This amount should then be distributed to each of the 50 states to devise individual state plans as broad as Canada's.

The Canadian Green Plan is immense, complete, and integrated. For instance, it takes on sticky policy problems and transcontinental political problems on energy, air and water quality recovery. It announces the intention to virtually eliminate persistent toxic discharge into the environment. And it will require that government institutions lead by example, by cleaning up their facilities and mandating a Code of Environmental Stewardship. The Canadians intend to create new laws and give old ones teeth to assure sustainable development and to assure that everyone's needs, notably those of native peoples in places like British Columbia and the Arctic, plus women's and youth groups, are heard and heeded.

The sustainability idea began to emerge back in 1987, when the United Nations-sponsored World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published its report, *Our Common Future* (*Ecolog*, p. 100).* Norway was the first to base a national environmental sustainability plan on the recommendations of the WCED; the Netherlands followed suit and improved on Norway's plan.

Not previously known for environmental leadership, why did the Canadian government decide to act so forcefully on such a grand scale? One answer is that it is a response to political reality. In opinion polls, 95 percent of the Canadian public has consistently demanded improvement in environmental quality.

In the U.S., as in Canada, special-interest domination has blocked the idea of taking a serious approach to solving environmental problems, but U.S. polls consistently show that 85 percent of the public wants environmental improvement. Canada will still have a struggle to get this plan into action, but its government is taking a stand. The pressure here is building; it won't take much longer to force such a plan. The concept is powerful because the idea of a Green Plan applies as well to a community as to a nation; it reaches right down to the individual.

A second problem we have in the U.S. is that our national debate has been on single issues, missing the big picture. We've become intent on achieving easier goals, like saving wild rivers or trying to get an acid-rain bill passed. The problem with this approach is that we let politicians compromise on splinter issues, and let them off the hook when it comes to the larger principles and needed policies. Mr. Bush, for instance, believes himself to be a balanced environmentalist because he supports the planting of a million trees.

The Canadian plan is a wonderful breakthrough. It is just the kind of comprehensive approach to environmental recovery I've been hammering on for a long time, while I was in California state government and as an advisor to the Banff Center, a Canadian natural-resource-policy think tank. The fact that the great nation to the north, connected to us by land and commerce, is carrying out the dream gives me great joy, and hope for the world. ■

Former Point Foundation board member Huey Johnson is president of Resource Renewal Institute. This article is reprinted from the Institute's quarterly newsletter, Eco-2 Review *(the two "Ecos" being ecology and economics). For more information, write RRI, Bldg. 1055, Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito, CA 94965.*
—Richard Nilsen

* *Our Common Future:* World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987; 400 pp. $10.95 ($12.95 postpaid) from Oxford University Press, 2001 Evans Road, Cary, NC 27513; 800/451-7556.

GREEN PLAN

Waiting for a US

BY RICHARD NILSEN

A RECENT CONFERENCE ON national Green Plans made the United States appear backward compared to what's happening in Canada and Europe. "Green Plan" is a short name for a comprehensive environmental recovery program. Many Western nations now have one, but not the US.

The Resource Renewal Institute sponsored the conference, "National Policies Toward a Green Century," in Marin County, California in March 1992. RRI is the current project of environmentalist Huey Johnson, former Resources Secretary of California and a former Point board member (see his "Canada Heralds Green Plan," *WER* #72, p. 52).

Government officials charged with running these programs in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Britain, and Canada spoke. Several American states also have green plans; these were presented, as was the work being done by certain forward-looking American corporations.

Conspicuous by its absence was the US federal government. A lone Environmental Protection Agency official, Robert Currie, described EPA's method as "Driving down the highway by looking into the rearview mirror and watching things fall off the car, and assuming that because the road behind is straight, the road ahead will be too." This after-the-fact approach to environmental problems was given another analogy by several speakers: following a horse and cleaning up the manure, instead of leading the horse or riding it.

The Netherlands and Norway are riding the horse. Instead of dividing the problem into pieces — energy policy, air and water quality, wildlands/habitat, and forestry — these nations are taking a comprehensive, whole-systems approach to environmental recovery. Counselor for the Environment Johannes van Zijst explained that the Dutch currently have Environmental Policy Indicators for seven different components. Each is reduced to a line graph — down is good, up is bad. Every year the appropriate minister presents his graph to the parliament, and then has to defend it.

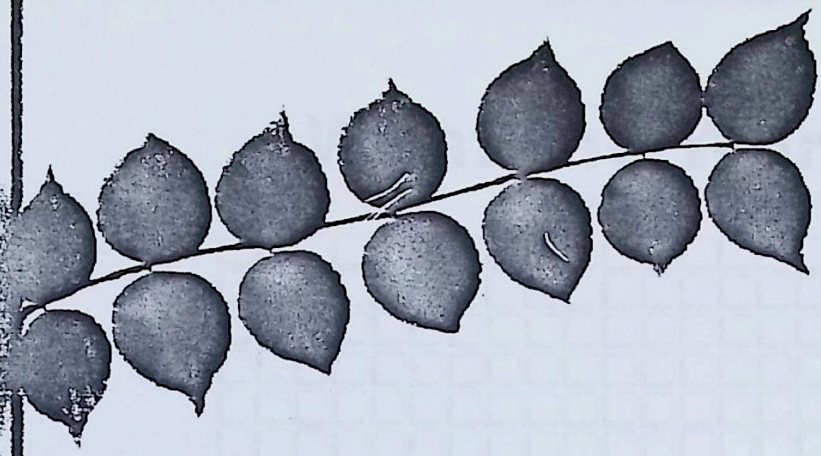
This way of doing a nation's environmental business got a huge shot in the arm several years back, when the Dutch Queen's annual Christmas address to her citizens basically said, "Our country is a mess and we must clean it up." That speech moved the ground of the debate in the Netherlands beyond "whether or not" to the issue of "how to."

Norway's Dr. Paul Hofseth seemed glad to be at the conference. "I've fled from New York," he said; he had been holed up there trying to hammer out policy as Norway's chief advisor to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Hofseth said that Oslo has a half-million people, and on any given weekend, 100,000 of them are out hiking in the mountains outside the city. That kind of connection with nature is intrinsic to the strong environmental policies Norway has adopted.

Instead of regulating its businesses to death, Norway sets performance standards for environmental quality; how a company complies is for it to figure out. The government regulators do spot checks; when they find noncompliance, the penalties are severe. Hofseth told of a potato-chip plant, on a large lake that supplied the drinking water for many surrounding villages. The plant had expanded illegally, breaking numerous environmental laws and mucking up the water. When caught, not only did they have to make everything right, but all the profits generated by the expansion turned into a fine payable to the government. Norway occasionally even puts its errant CEOs in jail.

The governments of the Netherlands and Norway were cosponsors of the conference, and they kicked in the money so that representatives from Bangladesh, Kenya, and Russia could attend (two of them were speakers). Get this picture: Dutch and Norwegian taxpayers footing the bill so that three poor nations too strapped for airfare could attend a conference held in a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed conference theater at Marin County's Civic Center. It didn't make me proud to be an American.

Johnson described these Green Plans as "a wonderful form of idealism," explaining that "these European nations and Canada are making moves



The Resource Renewal Institute's goal is to have a Green Plan implemented in the US by the year 2000.

they know are meaningless unless other nations join in."

The most vivid example came from Austria's Director of the Ministry for Environment, Dr. Heinz Schreiber. A series of charts showing airborne pollutants blowing out of Austria versus pollutants blowing in from surrounding countries made it clear that Austria is getting hammered from all sides. Unless there is regional improvement, the huge reductions Austria is making will prove futile.

Austria is moving ahead, both to set an example for other nations in the European Community and because the situation is truly desperate. "We have to worry about the effects of acidification on the most remote forests in our tallest mountains, because our narrow valleys are full of people, and the health of those trees is all that prevents those hillsides washing down into our homes," Schreiber said.

Transportation is another big environmental issue, especially since Austria sits between two larger EC trading partners. Everything that moves by truck between Italy and Germany goes over Austria's Brenner Pass. "We made a bad mistake many years ago," Schreiber said, explaining that the neighboring Swiss set tonnage limits on their roads and refused to enlarge numerous mountain tunnels to accommodate larger trucks (though they did improve their railways). Austria allowed heavier tonnage on its highways, and today is stuck with all the pollution. Schreiber says his government is writing specifications for a whole new generation of cleaner trucks. The next step is selling the idea to the European Community.

American businesses do a huge amount of pissing and moaning about burdensome environmental regulations — claiming they are a hindrance in competing with foreign firms. One story from Canada's representative, Dr. Robert Slater, made this posture seem like the flounderings of dinosaurs stuck in tar pits. The issue was chlorofluorocarbons and ozone depletion. The first goal was elimination by the year 2000; ozone-hole urgency has moved that date up to 1995.

Slater described a Canadian company that decided on total CFC elimination in three years, coined the slogan "Free In Three," and will soon have achieved this goal. Besides the larger environmental benefit, this decision is producing an improvement in the company's operating efficiency and has had a huge effect on the kind of talent it has been able to attract. Instead of hiring young engineers and saying, "Here is our production line — your job is to keep it oiled and running smoothly," this company was saying, "Your job is to examine, question and modify any part of our entire process so that we can eliminate CFCs." That kind of freedom and responsibility attracted the best talent available.

Attacking President Bush and the Republicans on this issue is too easy. Better to ask whether anybody on the other side is prepared to deal with a systems approach to environmental recovery. Are we really supposed to wait for a white knight like Al Gore in '96? The Resource Renewal Institute isn't waiting.

Its goal is to have a Green Plan implemented in the US by the year 2000. RRI's Johnson understands how the political process works; he told the story of a reporter interviewing an aged Norman Thomas, the perennial Socialist presidential candidate.

"Mr. Thomas, how does it feel to be a failure?" says the reporter.

"Failure? What do you mean, failure?" Thomas says, and then begins to tick off his policies. He had lived long enough to see most all of them adopted, always by somebody else.

"Every time I presented a workable idea, someone in another party would grab it and call it his own."

Resource Renewal Institute:
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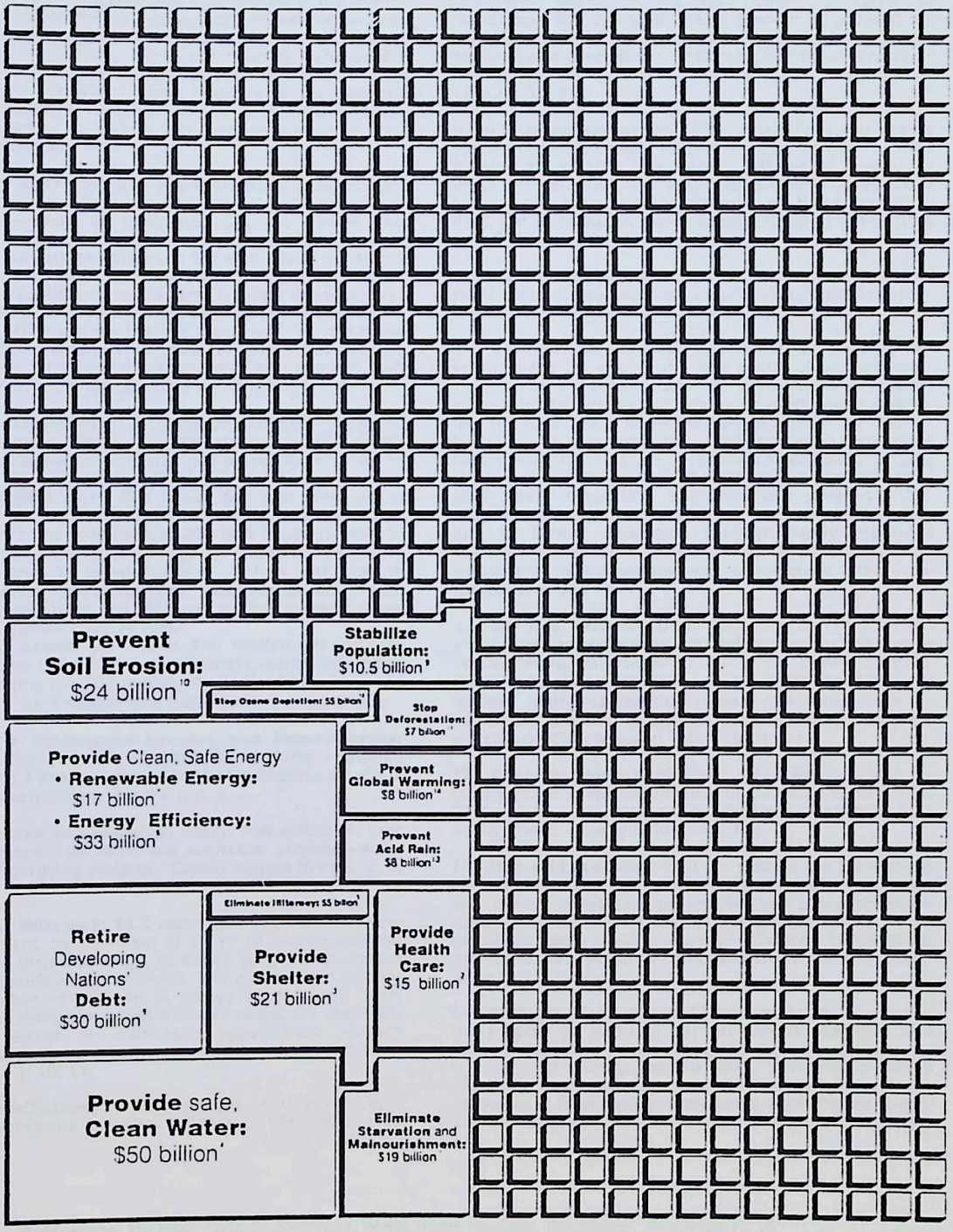
What the World Wants

— and how to pay for it —



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...using World Military Expenditures.

= Total Chart = Total Annual World Military Expenditures: $1 trillion

= One-tenth of One Percent of Annual World Military Expenditures: $1 billion

The above are annual costs of various global programs for solving the major human need and environmental problems facing humanity. Each program is the amount needed to accomplish the goal for all in need in the world. Their combined total cost is approximately 25% of the world's total annual military expenditures. Footnotes and references are on the opposite page. Full explanatory text is in "Doing the Right Things" ($5 postpaid from the World Game Institute, 3508 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104; 215/387-0220).

This chart seeks to make the point that what the world needs to solve the major systemic problems confronting humanity is both available and affordable. Clearly, to portray a problem as complex and large as, for example, the global food situation, with just a small part of a single graph is incomplete, at best. The following explanations of the chart's various components are not intended as complete or detailed plans, but rather as very broad brush-strokes intended to give the overall direction, scope and strategy. The paper, "Doing the Right Things" goes into more detail and is available from the World Game Institute at the address below. (References listed at end of numbered sections contain supporting documentation, further explication, and related information.)

1. Eliminate starvation and malnourishment: $19 billion per year total; $2 billion per year for 10 years for global famine relief—spent on international grain reserve and emergency famine relief; $10 billion per year for twenty years spent on farmer education through vastly expanded in-country extension services that teach/demonstrate sustainable agriculture, use of local fertilizer sources, pest and soil management techniques, post harvest preservation, and which provide clear market incentives for increased local production; $7 billion per year for indigenous fertilizer development. Educational resources of #10 coupled with this strategy. Closely linked with #'s 2, 2A, 2B, 4, 5, 9, 10.

2. Provide health care: $15 billion per year spent on providing primary health care through community health workers to all areas in the world that do not have access to health care. Closely linked with #'s 1, 3, 4, 5.

2A. Child health care: $2.5 billion per year spent on: a) providing Vitamin A to children who lack it in their diet, thereby preventing blindness in 250,000 children/year; b) providing oral rehydration therapy for children with severe diarrhoea; and c) immunizing 1 billion children in developing world against measles, tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, polio and tetanus, thereby preventing the death of 6-7 million children/year.

2B. Special health problems: $40 million per year for iodine addition to table salt to eliminate iodine deficiency, thereby reducing the 190 million who suffer from goiter and not adding to the 3 million who suffer from overt cretinism.

3. Eliminate inadequate housing and homelessness: $21 billion for ten years spent on making available materials, tools and techniques to people without adequate housing. Closely linked with #'s 1, 4, 5, 9.

4. Provide clean and abundant water: $50 billion per year for ten years spent on water and sanitation projects—wells, pipes, water purifying systems. Closely related to #'s 1, 2, 3, 9.

5. Eliminate illiteracy: $4.5 billion per year for ten years: $2 billion spent on a system of 10 to 12 communication satellites and their launching; $2 billion spent on ten million televisions, satellite dish receivers, and photovoltaic/battery units for power—all placed in village schools and other needed areas throughout high illiteracy areas; the rest (90% of funds), spent on culturally appropriate literacy programming and maintenance of system. Closely related to #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11.

6. Increase efficiency: $33 billion per year for ten years spent on increasing car fleet mileage to over 50 m.p.g., plus increasing appliance, industrial processes, and household energy and materials use efficiency to state of the art. Closely linked with #'s 7, 8, 12, 13, 14.

7. Increase renewable energy: $20 billion per year for ten years spent on tax and other incentives for installation of renewable energy devices, graduated ten year phase-out of subsidies to fossil and nuclear fuels, research and development into more advanced renewable energy harnessing devices. Closely linked with #'s 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14.

8. Debt management: $30 billion per year for ten years spent on retiring $450 billion or more of current debt discounted to 50% face value. (Much of developing world's current debt is already discounted to 10-25% face value.) Not only helps developing countries get out of debt, but helps banks stay solvent. Closely linked with #'s 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14.

9. Stabilize population: $10.5 billion per year for ten years spent on making birth control universally available. Closely linked with #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

10. Reverse soil erosion: $24 billion per year for ten years spent on converting one-tenth of world's most vulnerable cropland that is simultaneously most susceptible to erosion, the location of most severe erosion, and the land that is no longer able to sustain agriculture, to pasture or woodland; and conserving and regenerating topsoil on remaining lands through sustainable farming techniques. Both accomplished through a combination of government regulation and incentive programs that remove the most vulnerable lands from crop production; and by farmer education through vastly expanded in-country extension services that teach/demonstrate sustainable agriculture and soil management techniques. Closely linked to #1.

11. Reverse deforestation: $7 billion per year for ten years spent on reforesting 150 million hectares needed to sustain ecological, fuelwood, and wood products needs. Planted by local villagers, costs would be $400 per hectare, including seedling costs. Additional costs for legislation, financial incentives, enforcement of rainforest protection. Closely linked with #10 and 14.

12. Reverse ozone depletion: $5 billion per year for twenty years spent on phasing in substitutes for CFCs, CFC taxes, incentives for further research and development. Closely linked with #14.

13. Stop acid rain: $8 billion per year for ten years spent on combination of tax incentive, government regulation and direct assistance programs that place pollution control devices (electrostatic precipitators, etc.) on all industrial users of coal, increase efficiency of industrial processes, transportation, and appliances. Closely linked to #'s 6, 7, 11, 14.

14. Stop global warming: $8 billion per year for thirty years spent on reducing carbon dioxide, methane and CFC release into atmosphere through combination of international accords, carbon taxes, increases in energy efficiency in industry, transportation, and household, decreases in fossil fuel use, increases in renewable energy use and reforestation. Closely linked with #'s 6, 7, 11, 12, 13.

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Oops! A timber company got lost in the woods and accidentally logged two acres of the Fails' land, leaving it like this.

Woops —

We Seem To Have Cut All Your Trees!

The real costs of planet-plundering are rarely considered, let alone calculated. Here's a civilized antidote to cut-and-run logging from the Georgia Piedmont.

Joseph Fail and wife Meta own a 119-acre former cotton farm, now reverted to forest. To them, ownership includes the role of caretaking. Joseph explains, "We are all only temporary stewards. Our job is to take care of whatever lands we are fortunate enough to have control over in our lifetimes."
—Richard Nilsen

THE LAND MY WIFE AND I OWN and caretake was recently the object of a timber trespass by a local logging company. A timber trespass occurs when a timber company moves into lands not covered by a timber contract and cuts the trees. Such "accidents" are routine; the usual settlement, if the incursion is discovered, is for the timber company to pay the landowner twice the market value of the timber cut. The amount is too low by about an order of magnitude if the land's caretaker wishes to have the land restored to its original contours, roads and skidder trails removed, erosion curbed, trees replanted, and the loggers' left-behind tree carcasses moved so that one can move about and yet allow for the long-term decomposition of the dead trees.

When the trespass was discovered, the timber company sent a letter apologizing profusely and offering to pay us twice the value of the trees (pines and "in-the-way" hardwoods) removed or otherwise killed. The amount was about $800 for the two acres affected. We accepted their apology and rejected the financial offer. The company let us know they were prepared to go to court if we demanded more than what they considered routine and fair payment. They also noted that they considered the timber broker, who sold them timber rights to adjacent land, as the party most legally liable. We kept our focus on the timber company and noted to them that they could fight with the broker if they deemed that right and fair.

Instead of accepting payment for twice the value of the timber harvested, the Fails held out until they were reimbursed for the actual costs of restoring the damage, seen here one year after replanting. The amount was more than five times the original offer.

How To Teach Timber Companies Not To Trespass

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY JOSEPH FAIL, JR.

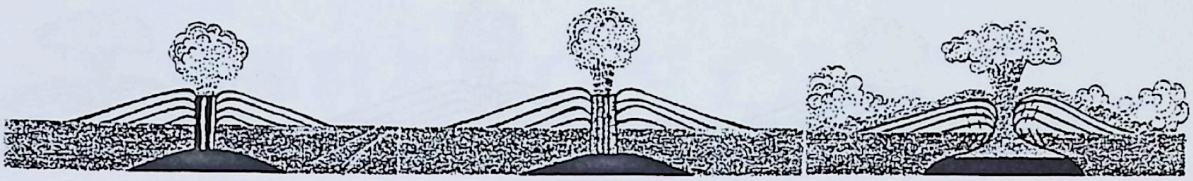
In order to arrive at a reasonable and fair restitution amount, and also to be prepared for a possible court battle, we set out to determine from local experts what was needed and how much it would cost. We asked the county soil-conservation officer to come out and assess the damage and to estimate the cost of soil restoration. The officer recorded the visit, so there was a government record to back up our record of his visit and his recommendations.

We hired a timber consultant to assess tree-loss amounts, then hired a local farmer with a reputation for high-quality land restoration work, to assess the damage and estimate what it would cost to restore the area. He calculated machine work expenses and tree- and grass-planting expenses, including the cost of reseeding a second time should the first one fail. We then charged the timber company $10/hour times 100 hours for the time that my wife and I estimated we would spend monitoring forest recovery over the long term.

We sent the timber company the sum of the above costs, which came to about $6,000, and said we would be willing to settle the trespass for that amount. They refused. We hired a lawyer and after some months of legal threats and various delays, they agreed to our terms. We agreed to drop the provisions for a second reseeding and they agreed to pay our lawyer's fees; after the dust settled, the final settlement came to about $4,500.

To achieve fair settlements in environmental assaults such as the one described, the key is to make early contact with authorities and experts who then record these contacts, and subsequently their assessments of damage and what it would take to restore the area. The companies involved then have to face a legal paper trail which is very logical and tight, and which they know they cannot throw out in court. Also important is consideration of the long-term work needed to monitor the recovery process.

In the end, valuable lessons are taught to all parties involved, and a stable and natural environment is more likely to be insured for the future. ■



Volcanoes of the Earth

Hawaiian Sovereignty
On Practicing What You Preach

A Letter From Peter Akwai

DEAR *WHOLE EARTH REVIEW,*

As you know from your subscription list of true Whole Earth maniacs, I've been living in Germany for the last fourteen years.

Born and reared in Honolulu, Hawaii, I've come to see the Europe of the 1990s as having one thing in common with my birthplace: acceptance of cultural pluralism in everyday life. It's ironic that the United States, which prides itself on pluralism as a virtue of its political and social system (and indeed views itself as the world's armed enforcer of democratic and pluralistic values) should be so backward in this respect.

Lately both the mainstream and the alternative press in America, from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Utne Reader,* have been cheerleading the struggles of Eastern European nations to regain their cultural identity and sovereign rights. The Dalai Lama and Tibet also figure prominently in these discussions.

Something about all this disturbed me. It took me awhile to put my finger on the source of my anger, but I did. It is this: In focusing, Cold War-style, on how bad the Soviets and the Chinese are, the writers divert our attention from similar issues on our own turf — ongoing oppression we could act directly to stop, since it is our government and its allies that are committing it.

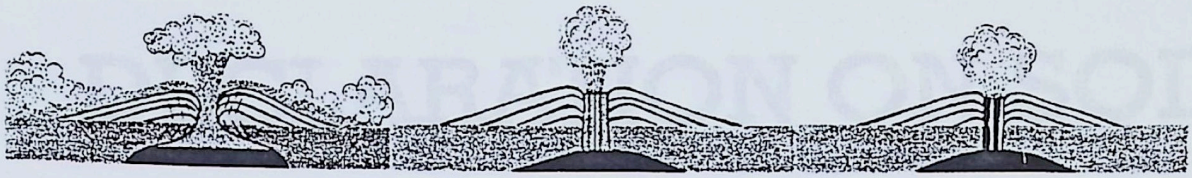
I'd like you to consider the case of Hawaii, before going off to campaign for Lithuania or Tibet or Israel or Kurdistan. I'd like you to support the restoration of Hawaii's sovereignty and independence.

Since the sixties, like you, I've lent my support to many different causes, left, right, center, Green, and "far out." But I never thought of my birthplace and its people as a "cause." My education at American-run schools in the Hawaii of the fifties left me with some big blank spots in my consciousness.

There was the hole left by being told that Moses, Jesus, Columbus, the "Indians," the Pilgrims, European history, the Founding Fathers, and the seasons, flora, and fauna of North America were important. And that Confucius, Buddha, the native Hawaiians and related peoples of the South Pacific, Asian languages and history, and the flora and fauna growing just outside our window were not.

Before 1959, conservative Christians in Hawaii led from the pulpit in denouncing customs like the search for the reincarnated infant Dalai Lama, or the sending of children to monasteries and nunneries, as Buddhist "superstition" at its worst. Earlier, Jesuit missionaries had urged Chinese to burn their lineage scrolls as part of a campaign against "ancestor worship." Communist authorities used the same rhetoric in abolishing these practices. The American religious establishment then accused *them* of destroying the social and spiritual foundations of China and Tibet.

There was the hole in me left by American anti-Communism, which educated me to hate and fear China, instead of learning about her, wishing her prosperity, and working for her development, as Jewish-Americans



or Irish-Americans find it natural to do for Israel or Ireland. My mother was born in Wuhan, and my father's ancestors came to Hawaii from Canton in the 1840s.

There was the hole left by the behavior of the American soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the Mainland, which made it clear that being *stationed* in the Islands entitled them to give orders to and look down on those who were merely *born* in the Islands.

There was the hole of not having the right words to describe how I felt and what I saw happening. And, if I found the words, of feeling I was blaspheming against The Flag to which I pledged allegiance each school day (today I view this rite as a kind of State Shinto indoctrination, American style).

We children thought we would not be OK as human beings until Washington, by granting us statehood, certified that we were "good Americans." *And if I am to be a good American,* I thought, *there are memories I dare not relate, feelings I dare not explore, ideas I dare not entertain.*

As the poet Wing Tek Lum wrote: "Everywhere to the west of us was called the East, and everywhere to the east of us was called the West." In America's frame of reference, Hawaii is clearly *nowhere.*

In Europe I finally learned the proper term for these experiences: *colonialism.* Between annexation in 1898 and statehood in 1959, Hawaii was, simply, a *colony.* Tibet and the Baltic peoples have at least had "republic" status, with a coherent native group able to press its identity, language, and rights. Contrast this to the U.S.-arranged waves of immigrant plantation labor that brought the proportion of full-blooded native Hawaiians down from 40 percent of the population in 1884 to less than 1 percent in 1960! That's what we call *cultural genocide* — when the "bad guys" do it.

Well, I've had these thoughts and have been chewing on them over here in Germany, as I read all the fine words from Washington and U.S. media centers about the Baltics. Come war, come *intifada,* I see we're going to continue supporting with money and arms Israel's claim to 4,000-year-old borders. We just killed 100,000 Iraqis for the Emir of Kuwait, while the feudal Saudi princes got Pentagon help in keeping us from seeing any footage of the stonings, amputations, and beheadings that pass for justice in *their* realm.

What about poor Christian queen Liliuokalani and her parliament, overthrown by a U.S. conspiracy so that the Navy could take her homeland and build a giant naval base? Dictators could learn a few things from us about seizing other people's land without having atrocities televised and attracting a big fuss.

How would Americans react to "Hawaiian Zionism?" A native South Pacific Irgun commando, or a New Caledonian Stern Gang against racism, colonialism, and nuclear testing? Terrorists already killed a Greenpeace photographer — oh, sorry, those were French secret agents (Paris: "patriotic heroes").

For that matter, how does having paid some gold and signed a piece of parchment with Russian or French tyrants add up to a legitimate acquisition of Inuit and Native American lands? And so on.

At some point I was consuming so much energy with these thoughts that I had to tell myself: *Yeah, this hippie radical rhetoric is nostalgic and fun, but the world* is *unfair, money* does *rule, peoples accept the murder of other peoples for their own advantage all the time — what else is new? What can* you *do about it, Mr. Lone-Wolf computer person? Get real, Pete.*

But reality has a way of leapfrogging fantasy.

In March I was back in Hawaii visiting my parents. To my surprise, in the four years since I last visited my home, native Hawaiians *have* started a movement to regain sovereignty. The date they have set seems optimistic: January 17, 1993, the hundredth anniversary of the U.S.-backed overthrow of Hawaii's sovereign government.

If you are stunned by the idea of America letting part of its territory go its own way as an independent nation in the name of a higher morality, consider how lightly and often we make this demand of China, the Soviet Union, the European colonial powers, or some Third World nations.

Doesn't the U.S. "need" Pearl Harbor and its other Pacific Island bases? Tibet and Afghanistan are also strategically located. Does that justify sacrificing them to the interests of their stronger neighbors?

Let the United States set an example of fairness and justice to its own victim, independent Hawaii — or forever hold its peace.

aloha,
Peter

DECLARATION ON SOIL

BY SIGMAR GROENEVELD, LEE HOINACKI, IVAN ILLICH AND FRIENDS

THE ECOLOGICAL discourse about planet Earth, global hunger, threats to life, urges us to look down at the soil, humbly, as philosophers. We stand on soil, not on earth. From soil we come, and to the soil we bequeath our excrement and remains. And yet soil — its cultivation and our bondage to it — is remarkably absent from those things clarified by philosophy in our Western tradition.

As philosophers, we search beneath our feet because our generation has lost its grounding in both soil and virtue. By virtue, we mean that shape, order and direction of action informed by tradition, bounded by place, and qualified by choices made within the habitual reach of the actor; we mean practice mutually recognized as being good within a shared local culture which enhances the memories of a place.

We note that such virtue is traditionally found in labor, craft, dwelling and suffering supported, not by an abstract earth, environment or energy system, but by the particular soil these very actions have enriched with their traces. And yet, in spite of this ultimate bond between soil and being, soil and the good, philosophy has not brought forth the concepts which would allow us to relate virtue to common soil, something vastly different from managing behavior on a shared planet.

We were torn from the bonds to soil — the connections which limited action, making practical virtue possible — when modernization insulated us from plain dirt, from toil, flesh, soil and grave. The economy into which we have been absorbed — some willy-nilly, some at great cost — transforms people into interchangeable morsels of population, ruled by the laws of scarcity.

Commons and homes are barely imaginable to persons hooked on public utilities and garaged in furnished cubicles. Bread is a mere foodstuff, if not calories or roughage. To speak of friendship, religion and joint suffering as a style of conviviality — after the soil has been poisoned and cemented over — appears like academic dreaming to people randomly scattered in vehicles, offices, prisons and hotels.

As philosophers, we emphasize the duty to speak about soil. For Plato, Aristotle and Galen it could be taken for granted; not so today. Soil on which culture can grow and corn be cultivated is lost from view when it is defined as a complex subsystem, sector, resource, problem or "farm" — as agricultural science tends to do.

As philosophers, we offer resistance to those ecological experts who preach respect for science, but foster neglect for historical tradition, local flair and the earthy virtue, self-limitation.

Sadly, but without nostalgia, we acknowledge the pastness of the past. With diffidence, then, we attempt to share what we see: some results of the earth's having lost its soil. And we are irked by the neglect for soil in the discourse carried on among boardroom ecologists. But we are also critical of many among well-meaning romantics, Luddites and mystics who exalt soil, making it the matrix, not of virtue, but of life. Therefore, we issue a call for a philosophy of soil: a clear, disciplined analysis of that experience and memory of soil without which neither virtue nor some new kind of subsistence can be. ■

*"You just might want to mention this as my program for 1992," wrote Ivan Illich in the note accompanying this manifesto. "1992" refers to the year when the European Economic Community is meant to make most of Europe into an economic unit that can challenge not only the US but Japan. Illich is a lifelong scholar of the commons, the infrastructure of real community which precedes economics based on scarcity, and which may follow it. From berating institutions such as schools (*After Deschooling, What?*), hospitals (*Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*), and even languages (*ABC: Alphabetization of the Popular Mind, with Barry Sanders*) which create scarcities in order to trade in them, Illich now joins the battle for the commons of soil.* —*Stewart Brand*

BackHome

A while back, the once-famous **Mother Earth News** *went slick. With its roots cut, it soon wilted and died. Some of the non-slickers from Mother's original crew have revived the original idea, if not the name. It's just about what you'd expect, but pleasingly minus most of the countrified hype that occasionally sullied past efforts. The Winter issue includes features on making toys from cans, how to reload rifle ammo, and what to realistically expect if you decide to keep a horse. There's a bit on choosing an old Chevy pickup, advice on back-saving woodsplitting technique, the mandatory recipes, and an article on bonsai. There's a lot more. Interesting ads, too — a good sign. It's all most reassuring, especially to would-be and just-arrived rural folk. I'm glad to see this publishing niche filled once again.*
—*J. Baldwin*

BackHome

$16/year (4 issues) from P. O. Box 370, Mountain Home, NC 28758; 704/696-3838

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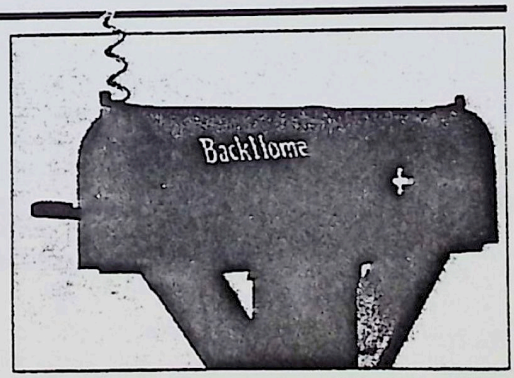


Swiss Army mailbox.

The corkscrew flag on our mailbox isn't just decorative but works as a signal to let you know from a distance that the mail's been delivered. It's nothing more than a dog's tie-out stake fastened to a few 1/8" plumbing parts so it pivots. After picking up your mail, you reset the counterweighted end on an extra catch attached to the door. The carrier does the rest when he or she drops off a delivery the next day.

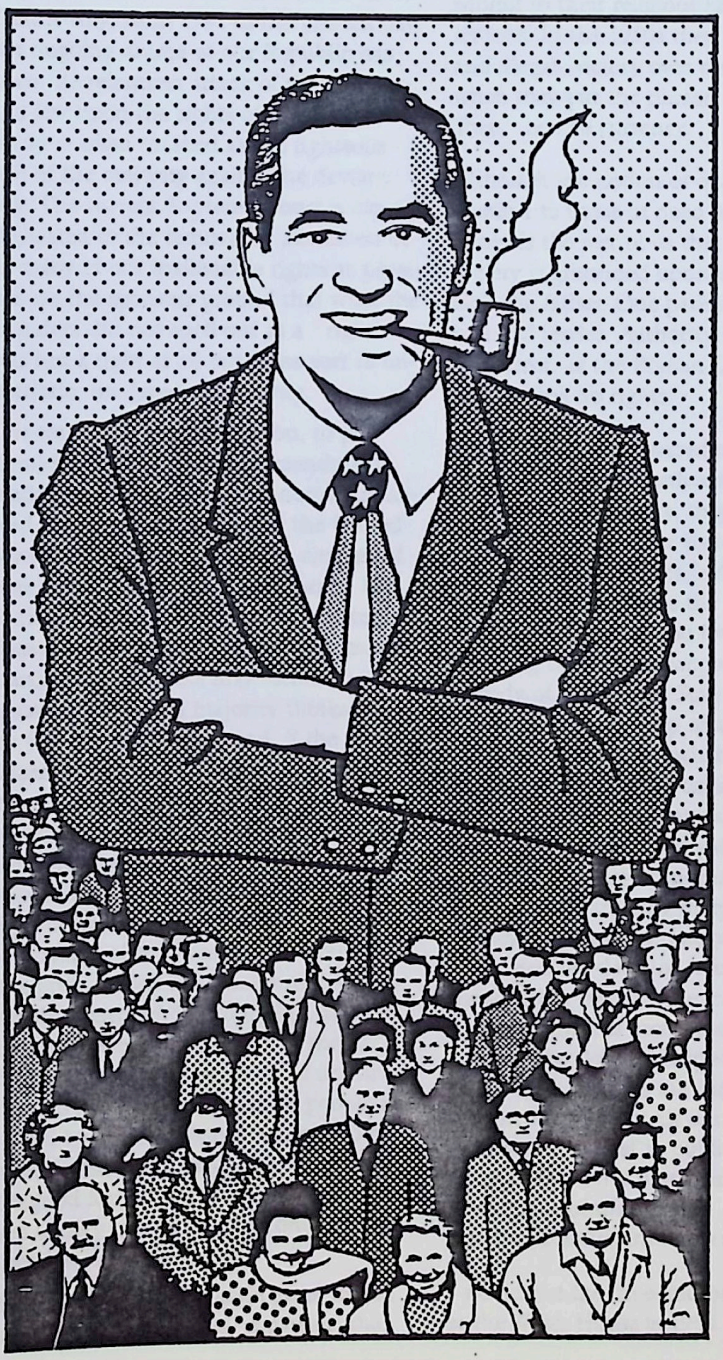
PART FIVE:

THE TROUBLES

FOUNDING FATHER KNOWS BEST

BY GORE VIDAL

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM TOMORROW



THOMAS JEFFERSON. This is where it all begins. With his Declaration of Independence, he created the *idea* of the American Revolution, as opposed to the less glamorous and certainly less noble business of simply deciding who pays tax to whom. Along with the usual separated-colony boilerplate, there would be a new nation founded upon life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The first two foundation stones were familiar if vague. What, after all, *is* liberty? Liberty *from* what? From everyone else? From decent opinion? From accountability? That debate goes on. But the notion of freedom from tyranny is an ancient one and everyone thinks he knows what Jefferson meant, including dreamy Tom himself.

The "pursuit of happiness" is the real joker in the deck. No one is quite sure just what Jefferson meant, but I suppose he had it in mind that government would leave each citizen alone to develop as best he can in a tranquil climate to achieve whatever it is that his heart desires with minimum distress to the other pursuers of happiness. This was a revolutionary concept in 1776. It still is. With a single phrase Jefferson had upped the ante and made our Republic — in name at least — more human-scale than any other.

Eventually we freed ourselves from England, thanks to the French fleet. At the end of the struggle, there was George Washington and hardly anyone else except a group of ambitious lawyers, overexcited by the prospect of a new nation with new laws and a complex judiciary in need of powerful advocates and prosecutors and interpreters. Hence a most lawyerly Constitution that, in effect, excluded from citizenship women, slaves, Native Americans and the poor. The Constitution's famous checks and balances were designed to check the man who would be king while making certain that in the balance the people at large would have no weight at all. That is why, unlike most First World countries, the United States has elections rather than politics.

The second revolutionary note was struck in 1791. Although the Founding Fathers were, to a man, natural conservatives, there were enough Jefferson-minded pur-

Notes on Our Patriarchal State

This article is reprinted from The Nation, *which last summer celebrated its 125th birthday by holding celebrations in several cities. Gore Vidal delivered a "State of the Union" address at the event in Berkeley, from which this essay is adapted. The speech is also available on cassette from Pacifica Radio Archives (800/735-0230).*

Vidal's life as a man of letters is equaled by his political acuity and his solutions for reforming the American system. His newest book is Who Owns the U.S.? *(reviewed on p. 27).*
—Richard Nilsen

suers of happiness among them to realize that so lawyerly a Republic would probably serve as a straitjacket for those of an energetic nature. So to insure the right of each to pursue happiness, the Bill of Rights was attached to the Constitution. In theory, henceforward no one need fear the tyranny of either the state or the majority.

Certain of our rights, such as freedom of speech, were said to be inalienable. But a significant minority has never accepted the idea of so much freedom for so many. That is why, from 1791 to the present day, the ongoing drama of our Republic has been the relentless attack of the prosperous few upon the rights of the restless many — often masked as the righteous will of the majority against the deviant few. The current Supreme Court is clearly dedicated to the removal or alienation of as many of our inalienable rights as possible, on the specious ground that what the founders did not spell out as a "right" was not a right at all but some sort of unpatriotic, un-American activity.

The result has been confusion, to put it mildly. The Fourteenth Amendment made it clear that those freedoms guaranteed to persons as citizens of the United States also applied to them as citizens of pure Utah or sex-sickened Georgia. But, so the argument goes, if the Constitution does not say that you may smoke marijuana, then any state may forbid you to smoke what a local majority thinks is bad for you. On the other hand, if the producers of death-enhancing consumer items have enough money, they can buy congresses, courts, presidents; they can also hire a consumer spokesperson like Jesse Helms to uphold the constitutional right of those who wish to pursue happiness and profits by making and selling cigarettes, which kill a half-million or so people a year, while forbidding, at huge expense, heroin, which kills in the pathetically low four figures. That neither tobacco nor heroin is good for people is agreed by all. But should either be outlawed in the sort of society that Jefferson designed for us? Finally, do we want a free society or a patriarchal one? My question is not rhetorical.

Patriarchal. From the Latin *pater*, father. As in father knows best. A patriot, then, is someone who serves the *father*land. The notion of the father as chief of chiefs is prehistoric. From this tribal conceit derives monotheism: the idea of a single god-creator who has created at least half of us in *his* image.

Although religion may be freely practiced in these parts, it was deliberately excluded from the political arrangements of our Republic. Unfortunately, the zealous few are always busy trying to make the many submit to their religious laws and superstitions. In the 1950s they won a great, and illegal, victory over the Constitution when they put the phrase "In God We Trust" on the currency.

Although the notion of one god may give comfort to those in need of a daddy, it reminds the rest of us that the totalitarian society is grounded upon the concept of God the father. One paternal god, one paternal leader. Authority is absolute. And error, as the Roman Catholic Church tells us, has no rights.

Each year it is discovered that when high school seniors are confronted blindly with the Bill of Rights, they neither like it nor approve of it. Our society has made them into true patriots, believers in a stern patriarchy where the police have every right to arrest you for just about anything that Dad disapproves of. The tragedy of the United States in this century is not the crackup of an empire, which we never knew what to do with in the first place, but the collapse of the idea of the citizen as someone autonomous whose private life is not subject to orders from above. Today, hundreds of thousands of Americans are only marginally free as they undergo mandatory blood tests, urine tests, lie detector tests. Speech is theoretically free but the true pulpit, electronic or print, is pretty much denied anyone who does not support the patriarchal state in all its misdeeds. It is no wonder that two-thirds of citizens under 40 have no interest in public affairs. They know they are not participants in the governance of the country. They are, simply, administrative units.

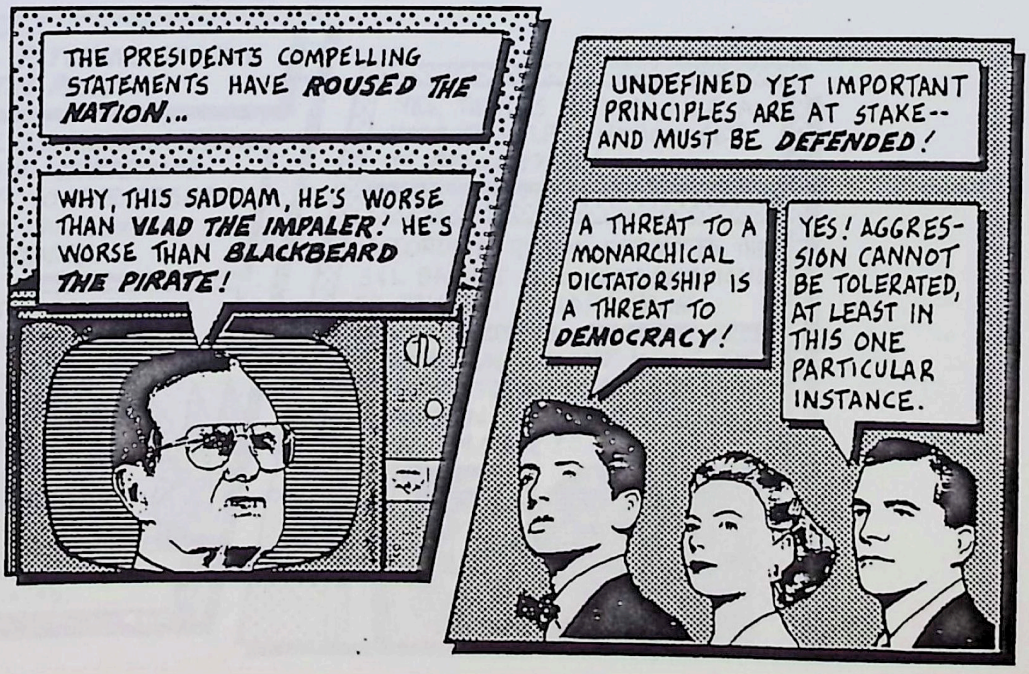
I would put the time and place of our fall as the White House in 1950. Harry Truman

I would put the time and place of our fall as the White House in 1950. Harry Truman and his advisers decided to keep the United States on a full wartime basis.

and his advisers decided that it would be a good idea to keep the United States on a full wartime basis even though there was no enemy on earth who could challenge us militarily or economically. Therefore an enemy had to be invented. The dictator Stalin fit the bill. So did atheistic *and* godless communism as a rival religion. But, said a Republican senator to Truman, if you really want to waste all that money on the military, you're going to have to scare the hell out of the American people. With a lot of help from Congress and from the likes of Henry Luce, Truman did just that.

Out of fairness to our inadvertent totalitarians, there was an urgent economic motive in 1950. We had made our recovery from the Depression of the 1930s *only* when the war put everyone to work. After the war, rather than run the terrible risk of a free economy in which General Motors would have to make something people wanted, like a car, we decided to take all the revenue — two-thirds anyway — of the federal government and put it into armaments.

The second reason for our garrison state is obvious: profit. There is a third reason, but I don't think most people in 1950 were aware of its consequences. A state forever at war, hot or cold, is easily controlled by the few, unlike a relatively free society, in which the governors are accountable to the people at large and to law. Today the neglected, ignored people have got the point: half the electorate refuses to vote in presidential elections. After all, was there any difference between Dukakis and Bush? Admittedly, Dukakis did not seem to mind too much if Kitty was raped by black prisoners on furlough, while Bush thought the flag was just grand, even if it was made in Taiwan. This was all good fun of the kind our rulers, who gave us prime-time television, think the idiots — us — will lap up. But then it is their job to divert public attention from the great corruption of the Pentagon and S&Ls and toxic waste. In the end there was a difference between the two: Dukakis wanted to increase the Pentagon budget by $4 billion, Bush by $11 billion. This being the extent of disagreement between the parties, it is clear that neither is an instrument by which the people might assert themselves and make known their will. As for a third party, we tried that in 1972. The People's Party. Unfortunately we hadn't realized that to have a third party you must have two other parties. We also found out that political parties, as opposed to spontaneous movements, are not possible in an oligarchy as entrenched as the one that rules us.

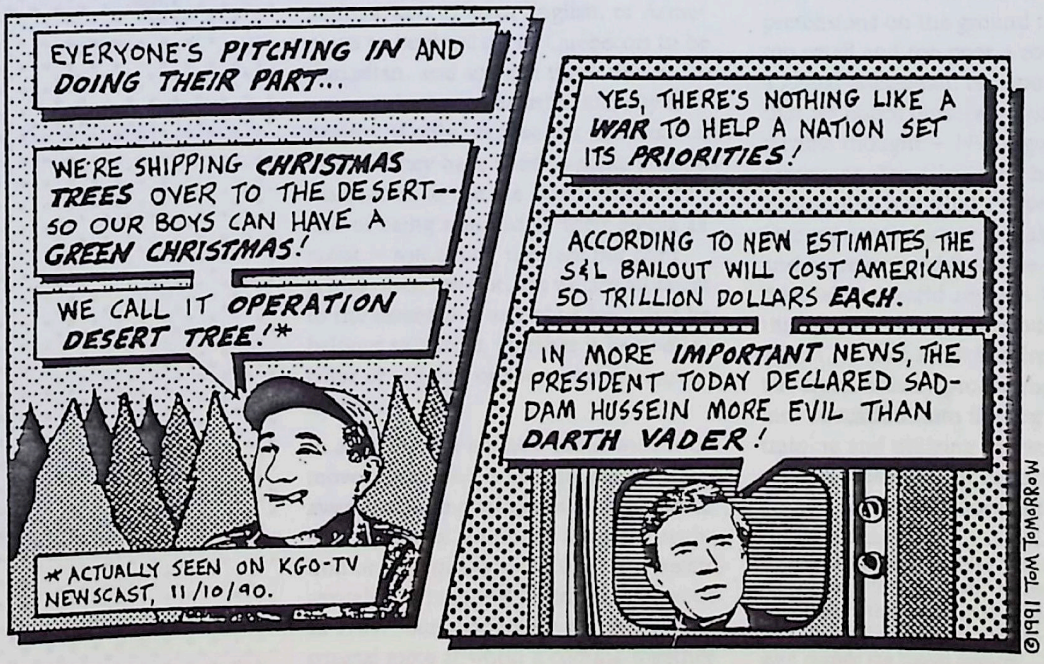


The small group that pays for the presidents and the congresses maintains its grip on the country through the media and the schools. After all, if people hadn't bought the idea that Noriega was the number one drug-dispenser, Panama could not have been illegally invaded so that Bush might not seem a wimp. Thousands of Panamanians died, as well as twenty-three American servicemen (nine of them killed by other Americans), for no purpose other than shoring up the image of the oligarchs' current spokesman, George Bush. Since the reading skills of the American people are the lowest in the First World, the general public is always easy prey to manipulation by television. This means that if you want to demonize drugs or the Arabs or the Japanese, you do so openly in the media. You also do it subliminally. As a result, in the past two years drugs was pushed from tenth to first place as a national worry. Now that communism has ceased to be the unholy devil, drug dealers, and users, are the enemy. Aircraft carriers are needed off the coast of Colombia to intercept drug exporters. And so two-thirds of the true budget will continue to go to the government in its latest "war" — a war that will not be won because no one has any interest in winning it, as opposed to expensively prosecuting it. The oligarchy does not care whether the citizens make themselves sick with drugs or not. What government wants is simple: total control. If this can be got by dispensing with the Bill of Rights, then that's a small price to pay. The whole tone of the Reagan-Bush management is one of open hostility to our ancient rights in particular and to the people in general. Today the poor, as Mr. Bush might put it, are in deep doo-doo. The rich are fed up with the poor. And if the poor don't shape up, the rich just aren't going to take it anymore.

The problem is money: who has it, who spends it and who gets what for what he paid. When it costs $40 million to create a presidential candidate he is not going to show much interest in the people at large. He will represent the folks who gave him the $40 million. Example: Bush. Since his election, what has he fought for? Environment? Education? No. His one crusade has been the cutting of the capital gains tax. That was the price the corporations demanded in exchange for buying him, rather than Dukakis, the presidency.

For thirty years I have made the same proposal to correct the great corruption. No candidate or party may buy time or space in the media. Give free media time and space to all candidates. Limit national

As for a third party, we tried that in 1972. Unfortunately we hadn't realized that to have a third party you must have two other parties.



No candidate or party may buy time or space in the media. Give free media time and space to all candidates. A single act of Congress could make our elections unbuyable.

election campaigns to six weeks, which is, more or less, what other First World countries do. A single act of Congress could make our elections unbuyable. However, those who have been elected by the present system are not about to change it.

The two parties, which are really one party, cannot be put to use. They are the country's ownership made carnival. Can the united action of individual citizens regain some control over the government? I think so. But it won't be easy, to riot in understatement. Attempts to cut back the war budget — whether the war be against communism or drugs or us — will be fought with great resourcefulness. When challenged with the billions of dollars wasted or stolen from the Pentagon, the establishment politician's answer is clear: Abortion is against God's law. He promptly changes the subject, the way a magician does when he catches your attention with one hand while the other picks your pocket.

Lately, though, our corporate oligarchs have become alarmed by one development in particular: the breakup of the nation-state almost everywhere. Since the nation-state, as we know it, is a nineteenth-century invention, I feel no sorrow at its demise. But those with orderly minds, eager to impose absolute order on others, are dismayed by the refusal of Latinos, say, to learn English, or Armenians to be Russian, or Québécois to be Canadian, and so on. I think this sudden worldwide desire for tribal identity is healthy, if only because our masters don't. Indeed, they have tried to make it impossible for us to use the word "race" for fear of being smeared by their media as racist — something they are but their critics often are not. Yet we are all racist to the extent that any of us feels that he belongs to a tribe, whether it be one of color or religion or some sort of shared identity.

In actuality, we are now faced with two movements. One is centrifugal: a rushing away from the confines of a nation-state, like the Soviet Union, or from any such iron order, equally unnatural, like heterosexuality, which was invented as recently as 1930.* Simultaneously, there is a centripetal force at work: a coming together of autonomous units for certain shared ends. Hence, the Common Market in Europe. Under a loose sort of confederation, the benefits of a common currency and joint environmental action can be shared by a great many tribes or races that choose, willingly, to cooperate. So we see, on the one hand, a healthy flight from the center in order to retain individuality, and, on the other, a healthy coming together to make a "more perfect life" for the residents of the common planet. Should centripetal forces defeat centrifugal longings, however, then welcome to the anthill society, and to our inglorious common death on a speck of used-up celestial matter.

OUR political debate — what little there is — can never speak of the future except in terms of the past. I shall, therefore, present a formula to restore the Republic by moving boldly forward into the past. I wish to invoke the spirit of Henry Clay. Thanks to our educational system, no one knows who he is, but for political purposes he can be first explained, then trotted out as a true America Firster who felt that it was the task of government to make internal improvements, to spend money on education and on the enlargement of the nation's economic plant. Clay, translated in a modern context, would have us abandon all military pretensions on the ground that we are too small and too poor a country to act as a global policeman. He would also suggest that we police ourselves first, and leave — terrible thought — Nicaragua to the Nicaraguans. Yes, Clay *could* be called an isolationist, but what's wrong with that? Our economic failure is making us more and more isolated from the rest of the industrialized world anyway. We could use this quiet time to restore our economic health, to take a few hundred billion dollars from military procurement and put it into education, into finding new ways of training and utilizing the work force, new ways of preserving or restoring earth and air and water. This does not seem to me

* According to Jonathan Ned Katz in *Socialist Review* for February 1990, the word "heterosexual," still not acceptable to the O.E.D., first appeared in *The New York Times* (where else?) in 1930. Plainly a new category, outside the known sciences.

to be too ambitious a program. Also, ideologically, it is absolutely — even sublimely — *re*actionary, and therefore salable.

But the highly progressive military-industrial-political complex will not easily let go. Ominously, our garrison state is now turning inward to create a police state. More than a million Americans are in prison or under constraint, the largest number, per capita, in the industrialized world. At least we are first at something. Currently there is a plan to reactivate old army camps to house drug users as well as pushers. Of course we could legalize drugs and get rid of the problem but where's the money in that? Where's the fun? Where's the control over all the people all the time?

Any optimistic signs? Yes. More and more of the people who never vote are beginning to worry about their personal finances. They are looking for explanations. And now that the Reagan magic act is over, the majority that does not vote can be reached. Not through the media but through videocassettes. One can make a videocassette very cheaply, with a movie star who will work for nothing,† in order to explain, let us say, the ongoing S&L scandal. These cassettes can be given out free all over the country, which is the only way that the people can be directly addressed as they once were, in the eighteenth century, through pamphlets by the likes of Thomas Paine. I got the cassette idea from that lovable old curmudgeon Ayatollah Khomeini, who flooded Iran with radio tapes from his place of exile in Paris. With those tapes he brought revolution to Iran and overthrew the Shah. I think we can do as well from our exile here at home. We will also have helped create that educated citizenry without which Jefferson felt life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness not possible.

I began this discourse with Jefferson, as did the country, and I end with his great injunction that, should all else fail, the tree of liberty must still be nourished with the blood, if necessary, of tyrants and of patriots. Have a nice millenium. ■

† I know that it is elitist to use a star when a real expert, who is really boring just like everybody else, is available. But on the nuclear freeze, say, Paul Newman was worth a dozen senators.

Who Owns the US?

In addition to his shelf-full of historical novels, Gore Vidal has been a keen observer of the contemporary political scene. This little book takes five interviews he gave between 1986 and 1989, combines the material and organizes it by topic. This is the first book in a "Real Story Series" by a new publisher; the idea is to make the ideas of progressive thinkers available to a wider audience (also in the works is a similar treatment of the speeches of Noam Chomsky). Whatever you may think of his opinions, Vidal delivers political analysis with style — he has elevated the put-down into an art form. Books on politics are not usually this much fun to read. —Richard Nilsen

Who Owns the US?
Gore Vidal, 1991; 96 pp.

$5 ($7 postpaid) from Odonian Press, Box 7776, Berkeley, CA 94707; 415/524-3143 (or Whole Earth Access)

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In 1950, the National Security Council was set in motion with NSC order #68, a blueprint for the state in which we still live, where 86 per cent of the federal revenue goes for war and the rest supports the largely irrelevant cosmetic government of Congress and Judiciary and the never-ending issues-less presidential elections.

Ollie North gave the game away on TV. In effect, he told the Senate, "We are the government of the United States and what are you clowns doing getting in our way? Don't you know that you are nobody? We *are* the government. We're saving freedom. We're saving mankind. And here you are screwing us up."

I gazed into those tiny little dishonest eyes and saw America, with a *k* that NSCers had inserted in place of our *c*.

•

Legalizing drugs would remove all drug-related crime, which is most of organized crime. There would be no playground pushers, because there would be no money in it. It would be the end of the Mafia, the end of the CIA's running cocaine from Asia and Latin America, as it used to do during the Vietnam War and still seems to be doing in Central America.

Most people don't want to die, so most people won't become addicts. The ones who will die are going to die anyway.

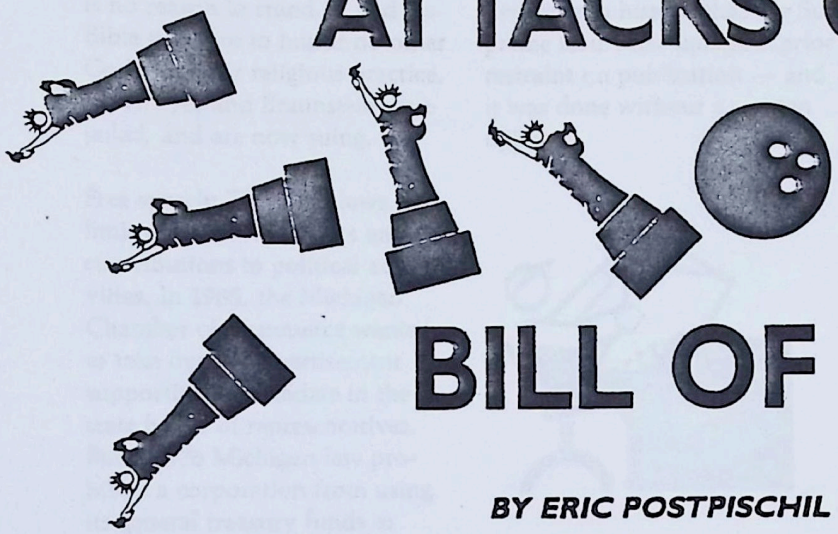
Beyond all the individual issues, the big one is, Do we want the state to be paternalistic and determine what we eat and drink, how we dress and so on? In my lifetime, we have moved away from a concept of the state as being something to run the post office. A convenience to protect persons and property.

For what it's worth, the founders didn't think that the Federal Government should be in the business of legislating private morals. To underline the point, they gave us a Bill of Rights.

I never thought I'd live to see the day when a President would get up in the Congress, where before him stood, symbolically, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, and talk about *abortion*. Reagan symbolizes the end of the American republic.

Whether you have an abortion, what you put in your own body, with whom you have sex — these are *not* affairs of the state. A government does not exist to control the citizens. When it does, it is a tyranny, and must be fought. The tree of liberty, Jefferson warned us, must be refreshed with the blood of tyrants and patriots.

ATTACKS ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS



BY ERIC POSTPISCHIL

As we were assembling material for this issue, a draft of this document appeared, unsolicited, in my electronic mailbox. The author is not an attorney, legislator, or professional writer; he's an outraged citizen who used the Usenet electronic network and a filing cabinet of newspaper and magazine clippings to help him collect instances of governmental or judicial erosion of fundamental constitutional protections. I passed the draft along to a civil-liberties attorney, who advised me to emphasize that this is a citizen's compilation, not a legal argument. She also helped me verify that the author's allegations are factual.

If you were wondering why you might want to use the political tools described in Jim Warren's article (p. 16), this piece might provide some motivation to exercise your constitutional rights, while you still have them.

This is Eric Postpischil's first published work. The author is a Senior Software Engineer for Digital Equipment Corporation, and lives in Nashua, New Hampshire; he can be reached via electronic mail at edp@jareth.enet.dec.com

—Howard Rheingold

HOW MANY RIGHTS DO YOU HAVE? December 15, 1991, will be the two-hundredth anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. How have those rights stood up over two hundred years? Probably not as well as you might think.

AMENDMENT ONE

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Establishing religion: While campaigning for his first term, George Bush said "I don't know that atheists should be considered citizens, nor should they be considered patriots."[1] Bush has not retracted, commented on, or clarified this statement, in spite of requests to do so. According to Bush, this is one nation under God. And apparently if you do not share Bush's religious beliefs, you are not a citizen. Federal, state, and local governments promote a particular religion (or, occasionally, religions) by spending public money on religious displays. Governments also establish religion via blue laws, which set Sunday as a special day on which business is prohibited or limited.

Free exercise of religion: Robert Newmeyer and Glenn Braunstein were jailed in 1988 for refusing to stand in respect for a judge.[2] Braunstein says the tradition of rising in court started decades ago when judges entered carry-

ing Bibles. Since judges no longer carry Bibles, Braunstein says there is no reason to stand — and his Bible tells him to honor no other God. For their religious practice, Newmeyer and Braunstein were jailed, and are now suing.

Free speech: There are laws to limit political statements and contributions to political activities. In 1985, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce wanted to take out an advertisement supporting a candidate in the state house of representatives. But a 1976 Michigan law prohibits a corporation from using its general treasury funds to make independent expenditures in political campaigns. In March 1990, the Supreme Court upheld that law. According to dissenting Justice Anthony Kennedy, it is now a felony in Michigan for the Sierra Club, the American Civil Liberties Union, or the Chamber of Commerce to advise the public how a candidate voted on issues of urgent concern to their members.[3]

Free press: In an apparently unprecedented order, New York Supreme Court Justice Michael J. Dontzin issued an order for prior restraint against the publication of a book by a former member of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service. Further, Dontzin issued this order with only scant information about the alleged menace represented by the book. The justice made the ruling based upon lawyers' descriptions of the material in a sealed affidavit in Ontario, Canada — material the justice had not seen.[4]

Free press: Another example of the erosion of rights can be seen in the Supreme Court's recent order denying CNN's application to stay the temporary restraining order prohibiting broadcast of the Noriega tapes. This was the first time in history that the Supreme Court has upheld a prior restraint on publication — and it was done without a written opinion.

In an apparently unprecedented order, New York Supreme Court Justice Michael J. Dontzin issued an order for prior restraint against the publication of a book by a former member of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service. Further, Dontzin issued this order with only scant information about the alleged menace represented by the book.

Free press: The equipment Craig Neidorf used to publish *Phrack*, a worldwide electronic magazine about phones and hacking, was confiscated after he published a three-page document copied from a Bell South computer.[5] Neidorf was indicted on felony charges of wire fraud and interstate transportation of stolen property, after publishing a document about administrative procedures used in a 911 emergency response telephone system.[6] The information allegedly had been removed from a Bell South computer, although it was publicly available in other documents and could be ordered by calling a toll-free 800 number.[7] Although the charges were eventually dropped, the prosecution has had a chilling effect on Neidorf, who has stopped publishing *Phrack*.

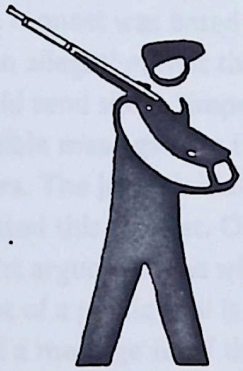
Free press: On March 1, 1990, the Secret Service (SS) ransacked the offices of Steve Jackson Games, damaged property irreparably, and confiscated three computers, two laser printers, several hard disks, and many boxes of paper and floppy disks. At the time of the raid, the company had been working on a game called *GURPS Cyberpunk, High-Tech Low-Life Role-Playing*. One of the agents remarked that he thought the fantasy gamebook was a "handbook for computer crime."[6] Though the government has acknowledged that Steve Jackson is not the target of any investigation, the SS held on to his property for months, causing him to lay off nearly half his staff and threatening the survival of his business. Subsequent revelations, including the unsealing of the application for the search warrant, suggest that there was no good reason for this raid and that it should never have been permitted to occur.[6]

Petition for redress of grievances: Rounding out the attacks on the First Amendment, on March 5, 1990, the Supreme Court limited the ability of state prison inmates to obtain Federal court review of their convictions and sentences. By the ruling that prisoners cannot make appeals based on favorable court rulings issued in other cases since their own convictions, the Supreme Court has

permitted states to execute people even though their death sentences would not be permitted today in light of subsequent rulings.[8]

AMENDMENT TWO

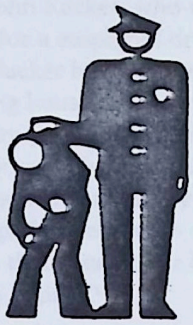
A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.



Right to bear arms: This amendment is so commonly challenged that the movement has its own name: gun control. Legislation banning various types of weapons is supported with the claim that the weapons are not for "legitimate" sporting purposes. But the right to bear arms is the last line of defense of our rights. In case there is an emergency, in case the people running the government get out of control, guns in the hands of the people — all the people — are the last chance to defend our freedom. Firearm regulations also empower local officials, such as police chiefs, to grant or deny permits.

AMENDMENT FOUR

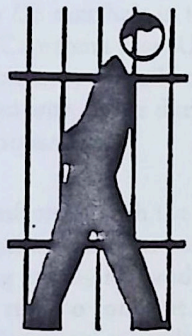
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.



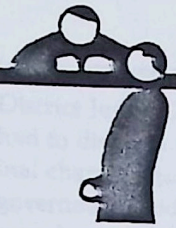
Particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized: Today's warrants do not particularly describe the things to be seized — they list things that might be present. For example, if police are making a drug raid, they will list weapons as things to be searched for and seized. This is done not because the police know of any weapons and can particularly describe them, but because they allege that people with drugs often have weapons. In *United States v. Leon*, the Supreme Court created a "good faith" exception to the rule that evidence seized in violation of the Fourth Amendment must be suppressed. This ruling permits the government to convict an individual based on evidence that was seized in violation of his rights so long as the illegal seizure was a "reasonable" mistake.

AMENDMENT FIVE

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in the time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.



Compelled to be a witness against himself: In the New York Central Park assault case, three people were found guilty of assault. But there was no physical evidence linking them to the crime; hair, clothing, and semen did not match any of the defendants.[9] [10] The only evidence the state had was confessions. To obtain these confessions, the police questioned 15-year-old Yusef Salaam without a parent present — which is illegal under New York State law.[11] Police screamed "You better tell us what we want to hear and cooperate or you are going to jail," at 14-year-old Antron McCray, according to Bobby McCray, his father.[12] Antron McCray "confessed" after his father told him to, because the police said they would release him if he confessed.[13] These people were coerced into bearing witness against themselves, and those confessions were used to convict them.



Surprisingly, the right to a public trial is under attack. When Marion Barry was being tried, the prosecution attempted to bar Louis Farrakhan and George Stallings from the gallery. This request was based on an allegation that they would send silent "impermissible messages" to the jurors. The judge initially granted this request. One might argue that the whole point of a public trial is to send a message to *all* the participants that the public is watching; the trial had better be fair.

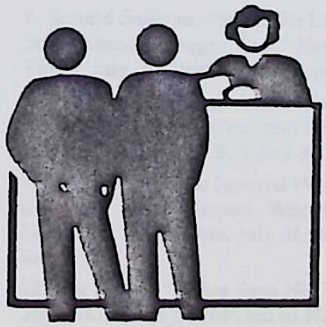
●

Compelled to be a witness against himself: The Supreme Court has held that the government can compel people to produce all kinds of evidence against themselves, from standing in a lineup, to giving voice, handwriting, and blood samples. Two years ago the Court even held that the target of a grand jury investigation could be compelled to sign a form authorizing a foreign bank to release any documents in his name.

Deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law: This clause is violated on each of the items: life, liberty, and property. Incidents including such violations are described elsewhere in this article. Here are two more: On March 26, 1987, in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, Jeffery Miles was killed by police officer John Rucker, who was looking for a suspected drug dealer. Rucker had been sent to the wrong house; Miles was not wanted by police.[14] He received no due process. In Detroit, $4,834 was seized from a grocery store after dogs detected traces of cocaine on three one-dollar bills in a cash register.[15]

AMENDMENT SIX

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.



The right to a speedy and public trial: Surprisingly, the right to a public trial is under attack. When Marion Barry was being tried, the prosecution attempted to bar Louis Farrakhan and George Stallings from the gallery. This request was based on an allegation that they would send silent "impermissible messages" to the jurors.[16] The judge initially granted this request.[17] One might argue that the whole point of a public trial is to send a message to *all* the participants that the public is watching; the trial had better be fair.

By an impartial jury: US District Judge Edward Rafeedie is investigating improper influence on jurors by US marshals in the Enrique Camarena case. US marshals apparently illegally communicated with jurors during deliberations.[18]

To be confronted with the witnesses against him: The courts are beginning to play fast and loose with the right to confront witnesses. Testimony via videotape or one-way television is being used for former Presidents and children. Such procedures reduce the information a jury receives. First, the lack of physical presence of the witness makes it more difficult for the jury to judge his veracity and get an accurate impression of what he is saying. Second, the cumbersome procedures involved reduce the ability of either prosecution or defense to cross-examine the witness — a step that is essential to bringing out the truth in difficult situations.

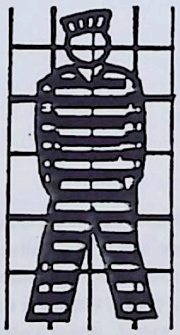
To have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses: When John Poindexter subpoenaed Ronald Reagan as a witness in Poindexter's trial, Reagan successfully fought the subpoena.[19] The White House and the Justice Department also opposed providing documents in response to subpoenas of Oliver North.[20] Without the disputed papers, Federal

District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell had to dismisss the main criminal charges against North.[21] The government said the documents were being held for reasons of national security. Some of the documents had already been made public by release to a private institute in another court case. The prosecution knew this but still told the court the documents were secret.[22]

To have public counsel: Connecticut Judge Joseph Sylvester is refusing to assign public defenders to people *accused* of drug-related crimes, including drunk driving.[23]

AMENDMENT EIGHT

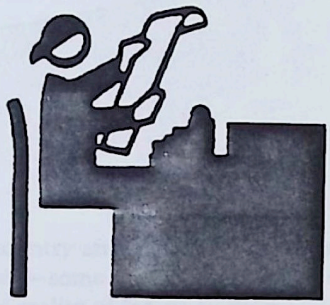
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.



Excessive bail and fines: Tallahatchie County in Mississippi charges ten dollars a day to each person who spends time in the jail, regardless of the length of stay or the outcome of their trial. This means that innocent people are forced to pay. Marvin Willis was stuck in jail for 90 days, trying to raise $2,500 bail on an assault charge. But after he made that bail, he was kept imprisoned because he could not pay the $900 rent Tallahatchie demanded. Nine former inmates are suing the county for this practice.[24]

Cruel and unusual punishments: A life sentence for selling a quarter of a gram of cocaine for $20 — that is what Ricky Isom was sentenced to in February 1990 in Cobb County, Georgia. It was Isom's second conviction in two years, and state law imposes a mandatory sentence. Even the judge pronouncing the sentence thought it cruel; Judge Tom Cauthorn expressed grave reservations before sentencing Isom and Douglas Rucks (convicted of selling 3.5 grams of cocaine in a separate but similar case). Judge Cauthorn called the sentences "Draconian."[25] ■

FOOTNOTES:



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WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE

Eviction's No Fiction

BY SCOTT LECKIE

A TRAGIC and often violent reality played out daily in country after country, though largely ignored by the media, confronts every nation on earth — some sporadically, others in nothing less than huge dimensions. This is the global reality of forced eviction — when many of the world's governments have their way.

In Amsterdam last year, I met a fellow who has made the problem of homelessness (on a global scale) into his life's work. Scott Leckie, a human-rights and housing-rights consultant based in the Netherlands, acts as legal advisor to Habitat International Coalition and as occasional consultant to the UN Centre for Human Rights. Leckie can be contacted at Havikstraat 38bis, 3514 TR Utrecht, the Netherlands. His door is always open. —Howard Rheingold

In mid-1990, the Executive Director of the UN Centre for Human Settlements noted, "I think we all agree that, in spite of isolated cases here and there, large-scale clearance operations [evictions] are a thing of the past." Unfortunately, he just hasn't looked hard enough. The forced eviction of people from their homes has never been so common as right now. Indeed, indications are that the practice is growing.

No government or international agency collects data on evictions, but annual estimates run in the millions. Evictions in South Africa and the Israeli-occupied territories are well documented. Yet when the international community wants to see something else, it certainly does. Perhaps for this reason, the UN Commission on Human Settlements, which held session in Zimbabwe last May, refused to adopt a resolution condemning this phenomenon despite much evidence pointing to the human-rights violations that inevitably accompany evictions.

A TOURIST brochure extols the natural beauties of the Dominican Republic:

> Exotic fruits like mango, papaya and avocado hang along the sides of the road. And for parrots, kolbris, pelicans and flamingos you won't need to go to the zoo. Watch out you don't step on the crocodile! Don't forget the beautiful sand beaches and waving palm trees . . .

. . . And don't forget the evictions. When 1992 comes around, accompanied as it will be by worldwide celebratory hysteria in commemoration of Columbus's accidental landing there some 500 years ago, the Dominican Republic — the eviction capital of Latin America — will look a lot different than it did only two or three years ago.

The two major urban centers of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo and Santiago, have been transformed by the forced evictions of over 15,000 families since preparations for the celebration began in 1988. With little or no warning or compensation, 120,000 of the na-

tion's poorest citizens have been trucked away, to "beautify" the cities for an expected onslaught of tourists.

Although the Dominican Republic's government was condemned and declared to be in violation of its obligations under international law by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights last December, the nation's leaders continue to assert that each oustee was rehoused in a modern apartment. Yet leaders of local community-based organizations working with the displaced communities insist that the families were lucky to receive $50 for the destruction of their homes.

"Beautiful City Campaigns" continue to be part of the urban landscape in many countries. Bombay and Delhi attempted to "beautify" in the mid-1970s. Only last year, the Bombay High Court referred to the city's 3-4 million slum dwellers as "a cancerous rot, destroying the beauty of our city."

Similar destructive efforts have taken place in Nairobi, Hong Kong, Lagos, Calcutta, Seoul, Brussels, and Paris. In the US, "urban renewal" acts as a convenient cover for evictions. Estimates point to some 2.5 million people displaced annually.

FORCED eviction takes on numerous forms and is based on yet more numerous rationales, including overcrowding, public health, "the pathological nature of the slums," and the building of roads and dams. A particularly disturbing manifestation of this practice occurs with increasing frequency prior to international events: Olympic Games, World's Fairs, international celebrations and conferences — those events seen on the planet's ubiquitous television screens.

The 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, which fared so well in the eyes of the world, were preceded by the largest government-sponsored eviction program the world witnessed during the 1980s. To build a new Olympic village and to present South Korea's proud economic "miracle" to the international audience, over 800,000 of Seoul's poorest were forcibly and permanently removed from their homes. Thirteen people died as a result of this "beautification." As the world watched gymnasts tumble and fencers fence, those left out of Seoul's economic miracle were forced to fend for themselves.

One is forced to wonder how Barcelona will react to its role in holding the 1992 Games. What about Atlanta in 1996?

In preparation for the 1991 Asian Games in Beijing, authorities demolished entire neighborhoods to make room for more internationally palatable notions of housing. The occupying Chinese administration in Tibet has bulldozed the ancient capital of Lhasa in preparation for this year's fortieth anniversary of the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet; only 2 percent of the city currently consists of traditional Tibetan housing. In the 1980s, Manila hosted the Miss Universe beauty pageant and a papal visit, in preparation for which thousands of homes were bulldozed. The plans of Romanian dictator Ceaucescu to demolish 7,000 villages "to create more arable land" were thwarted by the 1989 revolution.

A growing number of organizations throughout the world are focusing attention and action on the practice of forced eviction. A few are:

Habitat International Coalition
Cordobanes No. 24, Col. San Jose Insurgentes, Mexico, D.F. 03900, Mexico

Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
P. O. Box 24-74 Klongchan, Bangkapi, Bangkok 10240, Thailand

Settlements Information Network Africa
c/o Mazingira Institute, P. O. Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya

West Africa Evictions Network
P. O. Box 3700 (c/o ENDA), Dakar, Senegal

COPADEBA
Calle Interior F. No. 38, Ensanche Espaillat, Apartado B-105, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

PEOPLE do not always give up their homes without a fight. More than ever before, local, grassroots, community-based nongovernmental organizations are struggling to defend the dispossessed. These groups share the conviction that if appropriate visions of housing rights are enshrined in law and respected in practice, eviction might in fact become a thing of the past.

Housing-rights movements have sprung up all over the world. In India, the National Campaign for Housing Rights has applied pressure on the government to amend the Constitution to include housing rights and protections against eviction. With the exception of the Congress Party, major political parties in India have incorporated housing rights into their campaign manifestos. The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, based in Bangkok, has fought against evictions in Thailand, Korea, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and the Philippines. The newly formed West Africa Evictions Network is aiming to focus greater international attention on the region, as well as to encourage more appropriate responses to continuing housing problems there.

In August 1991, Habitat International Coalition, an advocacy group based in Mexico City, and other NGOs will pressure the United Nations Subcommittee on Human Rights to officially condemn the practice of forced eviction and violations of the right to housing. HIC will also urge the UN to adopt "guidelines for planning international events," "eviction impact statements" and, eventually, a Global Convention on Housing Rights.

While the UN may well act to halt evictions, it will remain incumbent upon governments to grasp the fact that evicting people from their homes not only has high financial and human costs, it ultimately solves nothing. As most predictions for the 1990s anticipate a rise in evictions, removals and displacements throughout the world, the need for governments to respect and protect the housing rights of their citizens has never been more urgent. ■

Dan Siegel has spent the last 20 years representing protesters and labor activists, some of whose stories are told here. —HLR

JUROR NULLIFICATION

BY DAN SIEGEL

EVERYONE WHO HAS EVER SERVED ON a jury recalls the judge's refrain: "You are the judge of the facts, but I am judge of the law. It is your obligation to apply the rules of law as I define them to the facts as you find them." Very seldom will a judge acknowledge, or a defense attorney dare to argue openly, that a jury has the absolute power to judge the law by acquitting the guilty, based on its collective conscience, in a decision that cannot be reversed.

The Fully Informed Jury Alliance (FIJA) is a coalition organized by libertarians and supported by tax protesters, pot smokers, peace activists and others who practice civil disobedience to advance their political agendas. It wants to change all this by passing state laws requiring judges in criminal cases to tell jurors that "they have the right to acquit someone because they believe that the law itself is wrong, or is being wrongly applied, even when the facts of the case support a conviction."

Juror nullification — the jury's right to decide the propriety of a law rather than the guilt of a defendant — has received widespread acknowledgment, if not support, throughout American history. In 1670, William Penn was arrested and tried for preaching Quakerism. Although he admitted the charge, four jurors voted to acquit and were promptly jailed themselves for disregarding the court's instructions. Their release by the Court of Pleas (the British equivalent of the Supreme Court) established that jurors could not be punished for voting their consciences. Juror nullification became reality.

John Adams said that jurors were obliged to bring in verdicts according to their "own best understanding, judgment, and conscience, though in direct opposition to the direction of the court." Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, agreed. Oliver Wendell Holmes pointed out a jury's power "to bring in a verdict in the teeth of both law and facts." Abolitionists successfully urged jury nullification when prosecuted for helping fugitive slaves. Radical defense attorney William Kunstler argues that jury nullification provides a safety valve allowing a community's conscience to overcome repressive laws passed by unrepresentative legislatures.

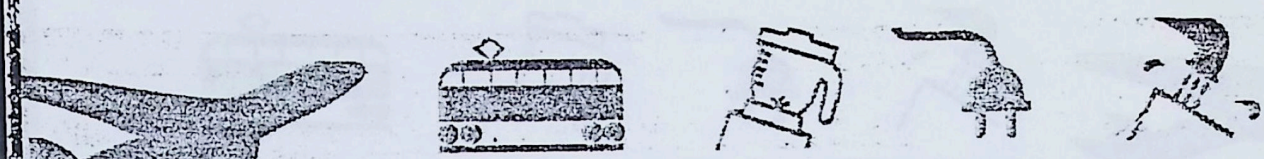
The premise behind FIJA's argument for jury nullification is that it protects unjustly accused criminal defendants against unrepresentative and repressive government. In a federal court trial in San Diego several years ago, weeping jurors felt obliged to convict three labor activists for conspiring to damage shipyard property during a bitter labor dispute. They told the judge that his instructions required that they disregard the defendants' evidence of entrapment by a government informer, and they urged a light sentence. (The judge agreed.)

But can a jury's verdict of conscience always be characterized as so benign?

On November 3, 1979, five civil-rights protesters were shot dead by a group of Klansmen and American Nazis in Greensboro, North Carolina. A biased and lackluster prosecution invited the acquittal of the killers in a state court trial; a second prosecution was initiated by the federal government on charges of violating the protesters' civil rights. The Klan and Nazi defendants made a classic argument for jury nullification: "Those commies had it coming, and we don't need a bunch of damn Yankee prosecutors from Washington telling us what to do." The defendants were acquitted.

Whether jury nullification represents the humanizing influence of community conscience in opposition to repressive government, or the legitimizing of demagogic appeals to fear and bigotry, depends on where you stand on the particular case being tried. Sanctioned or not, it remains a fact in American courtroom practice. ■

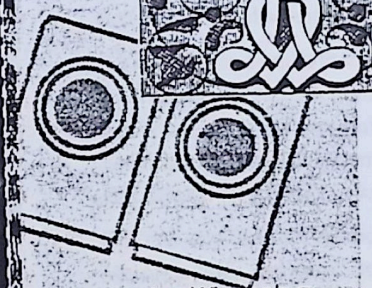
Membership in the Fully Informed Jury Association is $15/year and includes four issues of The FIJA Activist. *FIJA National Headquarters: P. O. Box 59, Helmville, MT 59843; 406/793-5550.*



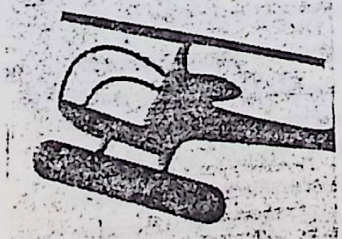
Artifact/Ideas And Political Culture

BY LANGDON WINNER

THIS IS A TIME OF GREAT EXCITEMENT about the fruitful possibilities of new technology, but also a time of grave concern about what those possibilities mean for the future of our society. Horizons visible in microelectronics and photonics, biotechnology, composite materials, computing, and other fields hold out prospects of sweeping change in our way of life. How should we regard these prospects?



Langdon Winner is a political theorist who specializes in social and political issues generated by modern technological change. He is the author of Autonomous Technology *and* The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology *(both reviewed on p. 22).*
—Howard Rheingold



As individuals, groups and nations anticipate technological change nowadays, they usually focus upon three questions.

First: How will the technology be used? (What are its functions and practical benefits?)

Second: How will the technology change the economy? (What will it contribute to the production, distribution and consumption of material wealth?)

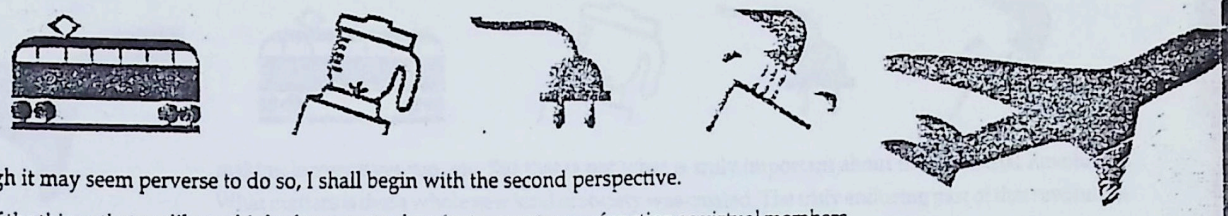
Third: How will the technology affect the environment? (What will be its consequences for global climate change, pollution of the biosphere, and other environmental problems?)

While these are important issues, another crucial question is seldom mentioned: What kind of world are we building here? As we develop new devices, techniques, and technical systems, what qualities of social, moral and political life do we create in the process? Will this be a world friendly to human sociability or not?

These are questions about the relationship of technological change to the evolution of modern political culture. In what ways do the development, adoption, and use of instrumental things affect our shared experience of freedom, power, authority, community and justice? How might we respond creatively to the role technology plays in contemporary political life?

In the titles of a great many books, articles, and conferences these days, the topic is described as "technology and society" or "technology and culture" or "technology and politics." But if one takes a closer look, such distinctions no longer have much validity. In the late twentieth century, technology and society, technology and culture, technology and politics are by no means separate. They are closely woven together in a multiplicity of settings in which many forms of human living are dependent upon and shaped by technological devices and systems of various kinds. Our useful artifacts reflect who we are, what we aspire to be. At the same time, we mirror the technologies that surround us; to an increasing extent, social activities and human consciousness are technically mediated.

In this light, any attempt to understand the matter might well begin from either of two basic starting points: (1) the technological world seen from the point of view of human beings and (2) the same world seen from the point of view of the artifacts.



Although it may seem perverse to do so, I shall begin with the second perspective.

Many of the things that we like to think of as mere tools or instruments now function as virtual members of our society. It makes sense to ask: Which roles, responsibilities, and possibilities for action have been delegated to technological things? Which social features are associated with a particular artifact? For example, does a computer in the workplace function as servant, slave, controller, guard, supervisor?

The social roles delegated to the phone-answering machine provide a good illustration. It used to be that only executives in business and government could afford to keep a full-time secretary answering the phone, screening calls and taking messages. Now it is possible to buy a small, inexpensive answering machine that does at least some of that work. Alternatives would be to answer the phone yourself, have someone else do it for you, or simply miss some calls. The machine serves as a surrogate, a kind of nonhuman agent that has been given certain kinds of work to do.

An interesting fact about these machines is that their initial use often brings some embarrassment. In the little taped message that precedes the beep, there is often something like an apology: "I'm sorry I can't be here to answer your call . . . " or "I'm sorry you have to talk to this machine, but . . . ". What one sees in cases like this is, I believe, quite common in modern life: the uneasy feeling that accompanies the renegotiation of social and moral boundaries around a technological change. But what is sometimes at first a source of discomfort eventually becomes a widely accepted pattern — second nature.

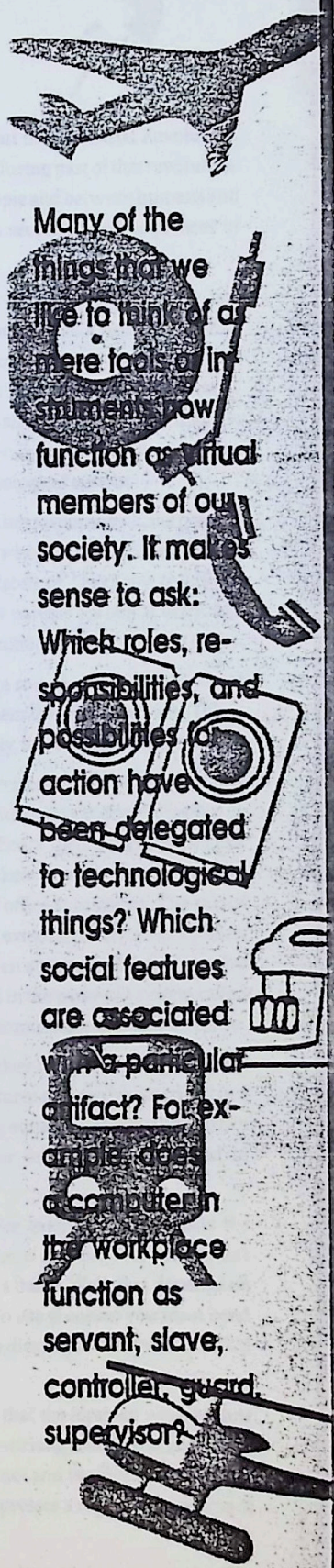
It is clear that in decades to come a great many things like telephone-answering machines and automatic bank tellers will become, in effect, members of our society. As their use spreads, the tone of embarrassment that surrounds their early introduction will gradually vanish. For better or worse, the renegotiation of boundaries will be complete. When I phoned a friend recently, I heard a recorded message that said simply: "It's 1991. You know what to do!"

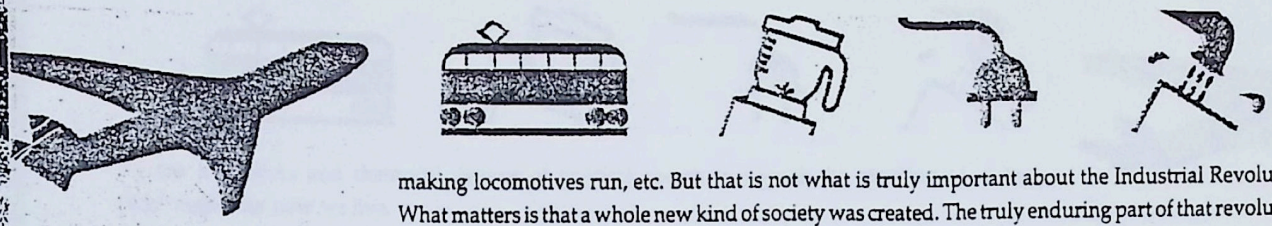
One can also consider technological innovations from the alternate viewpoint — noticing the roles, responsibilities, and possibilities for action delegated to human beings within and around technological systems of various kinds. Now one can ask: Is a person's guiding hand required for the system to function? Does the human give orders or receive them? Is the person active or acted upon? What social qualities accompany the human presence?

I will offer some illustrations in a moment. But first I want to call attention to the fact that once one has entered the twofold perspective I've suggested, one has the beginning of a social and political vision of technology quite different from the one that economists, engineers, and technology policymakers usually employ. One recognizes, first and foremost, that technologies are not merely tools that one picks up and uses. They can be seen as "forms of life" in which human and inanimate objects are linked in various kinds of relationships. The interesting question becomes: How can we describe and evaluate technologies seen as forms of life?

By comparison, in the conventional view of things, the story usually goes that people employ technologies as simple tools for rather specific instrumental purposes, to wrest new advantages over nature and to gain various economic benefits. Once these instrumental advantages and economic benefits have been obtained, other things may happen. There are secondary, tertiary, and more distant consequences of our actions, often called "impacts" or "unintended consequences": the broader social, cultural, political, and environmental effects of technological applications of various kinds.

For some purposes, it is perfectly acceptable to view technological change in the conventional manner. However, if you take a longer view of history, an interesting fact soon emerges. In the fullness of time, the "secondary" consequences of technological change are often far more significant than the results thought to be "primary" at the time. This is certainly true, for example, of the kinds of changes we associate with the Industrial Revolution. Thousands upon thousands of instrumental advantages and economic benefits were obtained during that period — techniques for making textiles, extracting coal,





making locomotives run, etc. But that is not what is truly important about the Industrial Revolution. What matters is that a whole new kind of society was created. The truly enduring part of that revolution, the truly significant aspect, is the multiplicity of relationships between people and between humans and technology we call Industrial Society, many of which arose largely as secondary consequences of technological change.

If one looks carefully at contemporary technological innovations in their broader human context, one often finds emerging forms of political culture. Several years ago Maevon Garrett, a woman who had worked as a telephone operator in Baltimore for 18 years, was called into her supervisor's office and abruptly fired. She was informed that a computer had been installed to monitor the performance of telephone operators and that data gathered by the computer showed that she was less efficient than the average worker in processing phone calls. At that moment Maevon Garrett became the victim of norms of productivity and efficiency embodied in the workings of a new technological system.

What is interesting, however, is not only the fact of Ms. Garrett's firing, but her response to it. She pointed out that some portion of her time each day was spent talking with people who dial a telephone operator because they are lonely or in distress — elderly people who live alone, or "latchkey children," youngsters who come home after school to an empty house because their parents are still at work. Ms. Garrett argued she would not hang up on such people just to meet the phone company's hourly quota.

It is reasonable to conclude that she was behaving responsibly: serving a role in civic culture, but not a role recognized by the norms of efficiency and productivity in the system that employed her. This is a case in which conditions of technical rationality and cultural rationality meet in flagrant conflict.

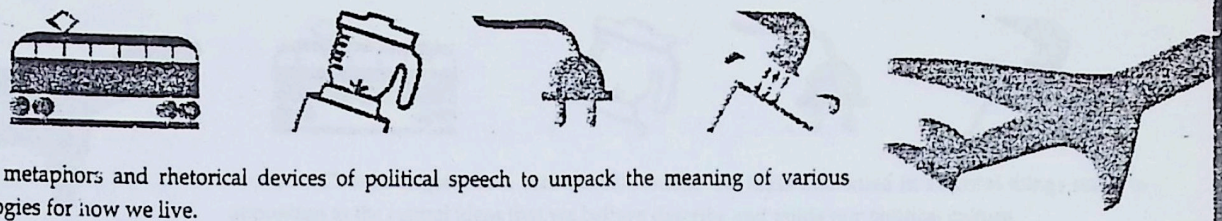
The good news is that, after a union protest, Maevon Garrett's job was restored. The bad news is that the systems design, the technopolitical regime that caused the problem, still exists and looms before us as a rapidly spreading form of life. Several years ago, the United States Office of Technology Assessment released a study noting that approximately 7 million American workers now live under rapidly spreading systems of computerized surveillance, an unhappy spinoff of office automation. The title of that report is, appropriately, *The Electronic Supervisor*. To an increasing extent in today's workplaces, computers are delegated the role of supervising; human beings have been assigned roles that involve working faster and faster while engaging in less social conversation — all in the name of a system called "communications," but one that drastically limits people's ability to communicate in a human sense.

The term "regime" seems perfectly appropriate in such cases. For once they have been designed, built and put in operation, sociotechnical systems comprise regimes with features that can be described in a political way. It makes perfect sense to talk about freedom or its absence, equality or inequality, justice or injustice, authoritarianism or democracy, and the kinds of power relationships contained in technological instruments and systems.

This is true of extremely simple as well as complex technologies. For example, if one visits the agricultural fields of the southwestern US, one finds workers using a hoe, *el cortito*, a tool with a short handle. There's nothing political about the length of a wooden handle, is there? Well, that depends on the broader social relationships and activities in which it plays a part. To use el cortito you must bend over or get down on your knees. A casual observer might say: If you're digging in the ground, isn't it sometimes more comfortable to stand up?

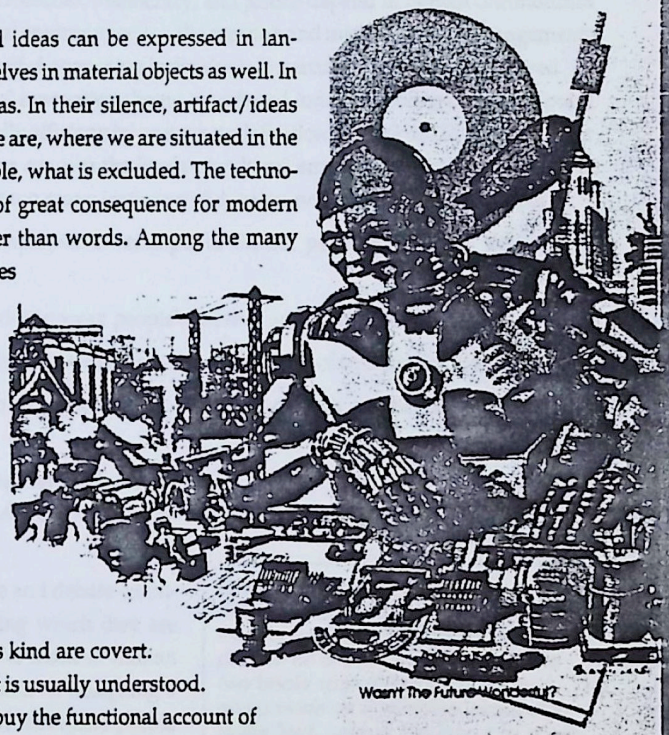
Why, then, has the handle been shortened? The reason is, in large part, that the foremen who manage the work can look across a field, even at great distance, and tell who is working and who is not. Those who are bending over are the ones working; those standing upright are not and the foreman can apply discipline accordingly. In that light, even the length of a hoe's handle expresses a regime — a regime of power, authority and control.

Embodied in the tools and instruments of modern technology is a political world. I am suggesting that



we use metaphors and rhetorical devices of political speech to unpack the meaning of various technologies for how we live.

VERYONE UNDERSTANDS that political ideas can be expressed in language. But ideas of this kind present themselves in material objects as well. In this form they might be called artifact/ideas. In their silence, artifact/ideas have a great deal to say. They tell us who we are, where we are situated in the social order, what is normal, what is possible, what is excluded. The technological world is filled with artifact/ideas of great consequence for modern political culture. Things often speak louder than words. Among the many ideas present in the structure of contemporary technological devices and systems are the following:



Power is centralized.

The few talk and the many listen.

There are barriers between social classes.

The world is hierarchically structured.

The good things are distributed unequally.

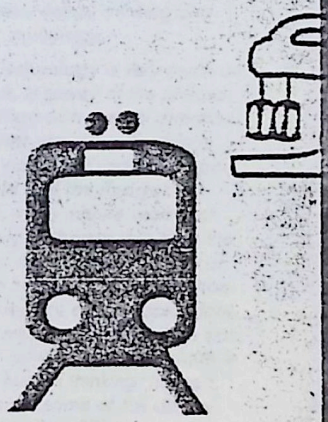
Women and men have different kinds of competence.

One's life is open to continual inspection.

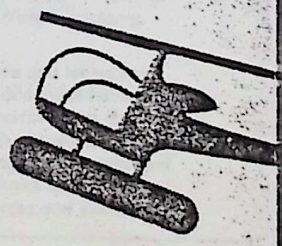
As they are expressed in the shapes of material objects, ideas of this kind are covert. They seldom become topics for discussion in the political sphere as it is usually understood. One reason that artifact/ideas tend to be covert is that most people buy the functional account of the meaning of material things. We are inclined to say: "This is a car, which enables us to go from point A to point B." "This is a hoe, which helps us to dig in the fields."

Another reason why ideologies in things tend to be covert is that they have been implanted there by those who do not wish the ideas to be known or widely discussed. The apparent solidity of useful things sometimes provides a mask for persons and groups who wish to exercise power while avoiding responsibility. Their alibi is usually something like: "This is the most effective way to do things" or "This is most efficient."

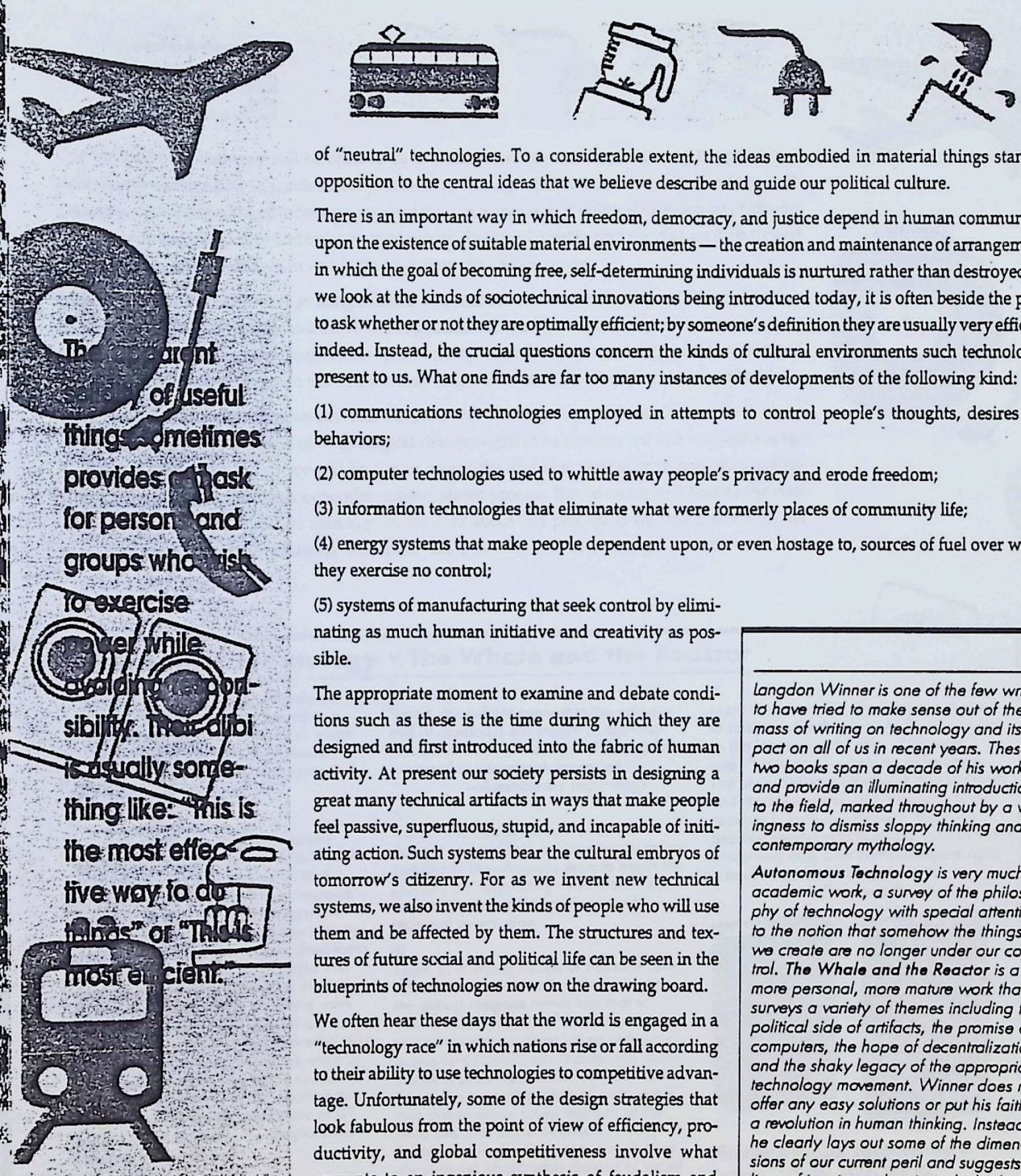
But whatever the source of specific beliefs and instrumental conditions, it is often true that ideas embodied in material things are painful or even dangerous to acknowledge. Artifact/ideas can involve astonishing contradictions. In particular, the mapping of the world encountered in the shape of things frequently contradicts the political ideology to which most people in Western societies claim to be committed.



Many of the artifact/ideas prevalent in our time stand in flagrant contradiction to the ideology of modern democracy. That ideology holds that human beings flourish, achieving what is best in their potential, under conditions of freedom, equality, justice, and self-government. In that light, societies ought to create social conditions and political institutions that make it possible for each human being's potential to develop. Both victories and setbacks in this regard are clearly visible in the laws, constitutions, and political practices that prevail in each historical period.



From this vantage point, a technological society is unique only in the sense that it presents new and seemingly unlikely domains—domains of instrumentality—in which the ends of democratic freedom, equality and justice may somehow be recognized and realized. I take it to be the fundamental failure of modern civilization to have ignored again and again how such questions present themselves in the guise



of "neutral" technologies. To a considerable extent, the ideas embodied in material things stand in opposition to the central ideas that we believe describe and guide our political culture.

There is an important way in which freedom, democracy, and justice depend in human communities upon the existence of suitable material environments — the creation and maintenance of arrangements in which the goal of becoming free, self-determining individuals is nurtured rather than destroyed. As we look at the kinds of sociotechnical innovations being introduced today, it is often beside the point to ask whether or not they are optimally efficient; by someone's definition they are usually very efficient indeed. Instead, the crucial questions concern the kinds of cultural environments such technologies present to us. What one finds are far too many instances of developments of the following kind:

(1) communications technologies employed in attempts to control people's thoughts, desires and behaviors;

(2) computer technologies used to whittle away people's privacy and erode freedom;

(3) information technologies that eliminate what were formerly places of community life;

(4) energy systems that make people dependent upon, or even hostage to, sources of fuel over which they exercise no control;

(5) systems of manufacturing that seek control by eliminating as much human initiative and creativity as possible.

The appropriate moment to examine and debate conditions such as these is the time during which they are designed and first introduced into the fabric of human activity. At present our society persists in designing a great many technical artifacts in ways that make people feel passive, superfluous, stupid, and incapable of initiating action. Such systems bear the cultural embryos of tomorrow's citizenry. For as we invent new technical systems, we also invent the kinds of people who will use them and be affected by them. The structures and textures of future social and political life can be seen in the blueprints of technologies now on the drawing board.

We often hear these days that the world is engaged in a "technology race" in which nations rise or fall according to their ability to use technologies to competitive advantage. Unfortunately, some of the design strategies that look fabulous from the point of view of efficiency, productivity, and global competitiveness involve what amounts to an ingenious synthesis of feudalism and capitalism. Many people in freedom-loving countries like the United States seem eager to embrace repressive models of social integration expressed in automation, electronic surveillance and pseudodemocratic "quality circles." But must we embrace these emerging patterns of technofeudalism as the wave of the future? Would it not be a wiser approach to resist, choosing to explore ways of extending our ideas about freedom and a just society into the realm of technology itself?

Langdon Winner is one of the few writers to have tried to make sense out of the mass of writing on technology and its impact on all of us in recent years. These two books span a decade of his work, and provide an illuminating introduction to the field, marked throughout by a willingness to dismiss sloppy thinking and contemporary mythology.

Autonomous Technology *is very much an academic work, a survey of the philosophy of technology with special attention to the notion that somehow the things we create are no longer under our control.* ***The Whale and the Reactor*** *is a more personal, more mature work that surveys a variety of themes including the political side of artifacts, the promise of computers, the hope of decentralization and the shaky legacy of the appropriate-technology movement. Winner does not offer any easy solutions or put his faith in a revolution in human thinking. Instead, he clearly lays out some of the dimensions of our current peril and suggests lines of inquiry and action which, though hard, offer some real hope of leading to change.* —*Mike Gunderloy*

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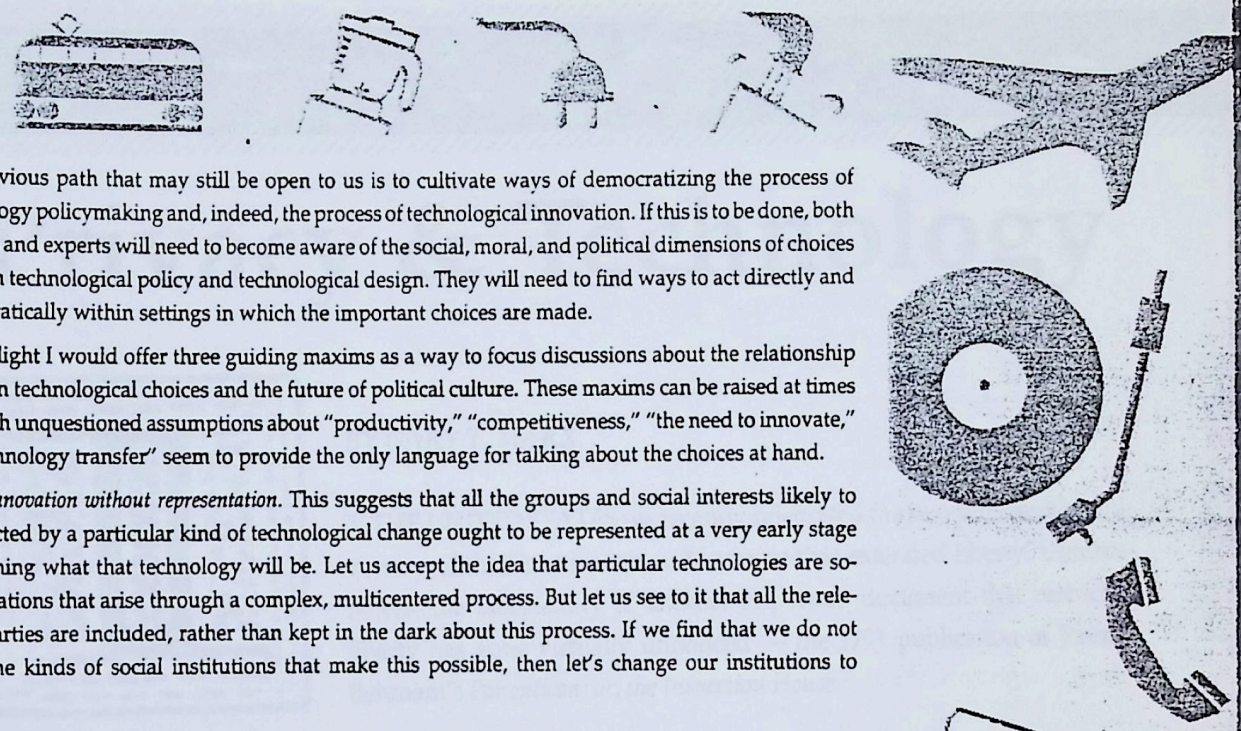
The concern of science and technology with the possibilities of control have often found expression in terms which closely parallel the language of politics. This is perhaps not surprising if one recalls that both politics and technics have as their central focus the sources and exercise of



One obvious path that may still be open to us is to cultivate ways of democratizing the process of technology policymaking and, indeed, the process of technological innovation. If this is to be done, both citizens and experts will need to become aware of the social, moral, and political dimensions of choices made in technological policy and technological design. They will need to find ways to act directly and democratically within settings in which the important choices are made.

In that light I would offer three guiding maxims as a way to focus discussions about the relationship between technological choices and the future of political culture. These maxims can be raised at times in which unquestioned assumptions about "productivity," "competitiveness," "the need to innovate," or "technology transfer" seem to provide the only language for talking about the choices at hand.

1. *No innovation without representation.* This suggests that all the groups and social interests likely to be affected by a particular kind of technological change ought to be represented at a very early stage in defining what that technology will be. Let us accept the idea that particular technologies are social creations that arise through a complex, multicentered process. But let us see to it that all the relevant parties are included, rather than kept in the dark about this process. If we find that we do not have the kinds of social institutions that make this possible, then let's change our institutions to

Autonomous Technology • The Whale and the Reactor

power. Our thinking about technology, however, seems inextricably bound to a single conception of the manner in which power is used — the style of absolute mastery, the despotic, one-way control of the master over the slave.

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In most modern technological systems autonomous action is truly available to the center alone. Some have argued that peripheral parts also exercise a measure of control by selecting which information actually reaches the center. A few varieties of highly technical organization, think tanks like RAND for example, have found that attempts at central coordination are more of a hindrance than help in getting work done. Taking such paltry signs as a cue, some observers have begun to predict that a collegial decentralization is the wave of the future. But compared to the success of central control in likes of the Apollo program or the worldwide operations of ITT under Harold Geneen, the alleged counterexamples are pathetic.

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In the vogue for "reading dynamics," for example, we see one instance in which the combined emphasis upon speed and efficiency — increased words per minute plus increased comprehension — reduces an activity with many possible values to a pure instrumentality. Slow reading, for example, can often be a marvelous occasion for thoughtful reflection. Nietzsche believed this and advised that readers take a walk to ponder the things that they found insightful in books. But Nietzsche was not Evelyn Wood. He did not know that the primary end of reading is not insight or illumination but merely the maximum information crammed in per minute expended.

—Autonomous Technology

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A crucial failure in modern political thought and political practice has been an inability or unwillingness even to begin the project I am suggesting here: the critical evaluation and control of our society's technical constitution.

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Taken as a whole, beliefs of this kind constitute what I would call mythinformation: the almost religious conviction that a widespread adoption of computers and communications systems along with easy access to electronic information will automatically produce a better world for human living. It is a peculiar form of enthusiasm that characterizes social fashions of the latter decades of the twentieth century. Many people who have grown cynical or discouraged about other aspects of social life are completely enthralled by the supposed redemptive qualities of computers and telecommunications.

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Often held up as a source of illumination on the most difficult questions and choices, the concept of "values" is better seen as a symptom of deep-seated confusion, an inability to think and talk precisely about the most basic questions of human well-being and the future of our planet.

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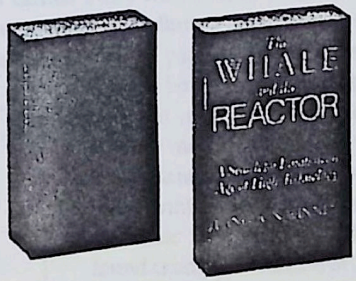
More and more the whole language used to talk about technology and social policy — the language of "risks," "impacts," and "trade-offs" — smacks of betrayal. The excruciating subtleties of measurement and modeling mask embarrassing shortcomings in human judgment. We have become careful with numbers, callous with everything else. Our methodological rigor is becoming spiritual rigor mortis.

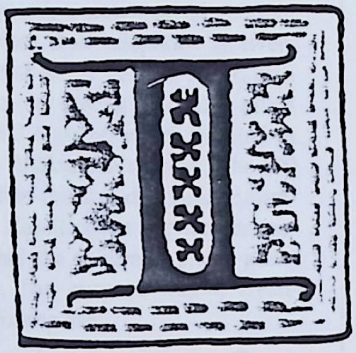
—The Whale and the Reactor



Autonomous Technology
Langdon Winner, 1977; 386 pp.
$12.95 ($15.95 postpaid) from The MIT Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142; 800/356-0343 (or Whole Earth Access)

The Whale and the Reactor
Langdon Winner, 1988; 200 pp.
$8.95 ($10.95 postpaid) from The University of Chicago Press, 11030 S. Langley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628; 800/621-2736 (or Whole Earth Access)

Privacy & Technology



BY GARY T. MARX

IN THE UNITED STATES we recently celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of the Constitution, a document that extended liberty. Unfortunately, the bicentenary of another important document that restricted liberty has gone virtually unnoticed — the 1791 publication of Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon; or, the Inspection House.*

Bentham offered a plan for the perfect prison, in which there would be constant inspection of both prisoners and keepers. His ideas helped give rise to the maximum-security prison. Recent developments in telecommunications, along with other new means of collecting personal information, give Bentham's image of the panopticon great contemporary significance.

The stark situation of the maximum-security prison can help us understand societal developments. Many of the kinds of controls and information-gathering techniques found in prison specifically and the criminal justice system more broadly are diffusing into our culture. We may well be on the road to becoming a "maximum-security society." Such a society is transparent and porous. Information leakage has become rampant; indeed, it is hemorrhaging. Barriers and boundaries — be they distance, darkness, time, walls, windows, or even skin — that have been fundamental to our conceptions of privacy, liberty, and individuality are giving way.

In such a society, actions, feelings, thoughts, pasts, and even futures are made visible — often without the individual's will or knowledge. The line between the public and the private is being obliterated; we are under constant observation, everything goes on permanent record, and much of what we say, do, and even feel may be known and recorded by others whom we do not know — whether we will this or not and even whether we know about it or not. Data in many different forms and coming from widely separated geographical areas, organizations, and time periods can be merged and analyzed easily.

As the technology becomes ever more penetrating and intrusive, it becomes possible to gather information with laserlike specificity and spongelike absorbency. If we visualize the information-gathering process as a kind of fishing net, then the net's mesh has become finer and the net wider.

Just as free association led to discovery of the unconscious, new techniques reveal bits of reality that were previously hidden or contained no informational clues. When their privacy is invaded, people are in a sense turned inside out, and what was previously invisible and meaningless is made tangible and significant.

It is easy to get carried away with science-fiction fantasies about things that might happen. But we need not wait for the widespread use of videophones, paperless electronic safety-deposit boxes, wafer-thin portable personal communications devices, satellite monitoring of individuals via implanted transmitters, or DNA fingerprinting and other forms of biometric monitoring to note profound changes in the ease of gathering personal information. Consider the following:

A college student secretly videotaped sexual encounters with a girlfriend. After breaking up with her, he played the tape for members of his fraternity. She learned of this and was victorious in a civil lawsuit, although no criminal statute had been violated.

Teachers in a school lounge were complaining about their principal,

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—Howard Rheingold

when one jokingly said, "Be careful, the room might be bugged." Just then they spotted a transmitter in the ceiling, which in fact had been hidden there by the principal.

During a toy manufacturer's television ad, a clown asked children to place their telephone receivers in front of the TV. The studio then broadcast dialing tones that called an 800 number, which resulted in kids dialing the number. The 800 number called had automatic number identification service and recorded the children's phone numbers. The purpose was to create marketing lists.

A friend went on vacation. On returning he had only one message on his answering machine. Shortly after his departure, a synthesized voice "interviewer" had called to ask if he would consent to being interviewed. Since he did not hang up, the system assumed he had agreed to be interviewed and proceeded to ask him a series of questions, pausing after each to let him answer. The interview consumed the full length of the answering machine's tape. In several cases citizens have won lawsuits because during an emergency, an automated dialer had captured their line and could not be disconnected, making it impossible to dial 911.

In Iowa, a woman overheard a neighbor's cordless-phone conversation on her FM radio. She was suspicious of the call and informed police. They instructed her to continue to listen and to record his conversations, all without a warrant, which she did for more than a year. The Supreme Court has ruled that such eavesdropping is permissible.

A variety of personal communication devices, such as cordless and cellular phones and room monitors for infants, can be intercepted easily (and often legally) by scanners, FM radios, and older TV sets with UHF channels. Cordless phones using the same frequency may also pick up wireless communication. Speakerphones may amplify communication. A conversant can never be sure who is listening. In a recent example President Bush was unaware that his off-the-cuff remarks were overheard by a large audience listening in via a speakerphone.

The line between the public and the private is being obliterated; we are under constant observation, everything goes on permanent record, and much of what we say, do, and even feel may be known and recorded by others whom we do not know — whether we will this or not and even whether we know about it or not.

Work monitoring has been taken to new heights, or depths, depending on your point of view. Quantity of keystroke activity, number of errors and corrections, speed of work, and time away from the computer can be measured. Programs such as CTRL and SPY permit remote secret monitoring of a target's personal computer use when his terminal is attached to a larger system. A permanent record of the intercepted terminal's input and output can be made. There is also the possibility of "initial screen repaint," which permits the watcher to see what was on the target's screen before the SPY program was activated. The headsets used by telephone reservationists can be converted to microphones to permit remote monitoring of all office conversation by a supervisor many floors, or even miles, away.

Home phones can be made "hot on the hook": An "infinity transmitter," whether attached to a telephone or part of an answering machine, converts the phone into a microphone. The individual who dials in (the phone does not ring) is able to listen to what is being said in the room.

The US commissioner of immigration has proposed a nationwide computer system to verify the identities of all job applicants. An FBI advisory board recently recommended putting the names of those suspected of (but not arrested for) crimes into a nationally accessible database, as well as the names of the friends and associates of known criminals. The director of the FBI rejected the proposal. Yet pressures to create such national databases are strong.

Marketing researchers are gathering ever more detailed data and carrying out increasingly fine-grained analysis. For example, supermarkets use the itemized bills made possible by bar coding to collect unprecedented information about consumers. Such information (when combined with the personal data consumers provide for checkcashing privileges) is easy to analyze and sell. There is often more to mailed promotional coupons than meets the eye — "invisible" personal data (name, address and other demographic information) may be in the bar code or elsewhere. The behavior of customers who agree to use "frequent shopper cards" is monitored closely, and it will be possible to market directly to households, using

coupons to steer them toward products with higher profit margins. Consumer behavior also can be linked to exposure to specific ads seen on cable television. Persons on the same block watching the same channel may receive different versions of the ad being tested.

Lotus Corporation proposed a new product called "Marketplace," to be available at retail software stores. Its database contained information such as name, address, age, gender, marital status, and estimates of income, lifestyle, and buying habits of 80 million households. The 120 million consumers contained in the database were not asked if they wished to have their personal transactional information treated as a commodity; they would not have been compensated for its sale, nor could corrections easily have been made. The product was withdrawn after massive public protest.

It is easy to imagine how marketing lists might be misused. Purchasers of pregnancy-testing kits may receive solicitations from pro- and anti-abortion groups, or from sellers of birth-control products and diaper services. Purchasers of weight-loss products or participants in diet programs may be targeted for promotional offers from sellers of candy, cookies and ice cream, or, conversely, those whose purchases of the latter exceed the average may receive offers for weight-loss products and services. Subscribers to gay and lesbian publications may be targeted by religious and therapeutic organizations, or face employment denials, harassment, and even blackmail. Frequent travelers and those with multiple residences may receive solicitations from sellers of home-security products, and such lists would be a boon to sophisticated burglars. A list of tobacco users might be of interest to potential employers and insurance companies. A list of those with credit troubles and excessive indebtedness would certainly be of interest to promoters of scams that promise to help people obtain credit cards or get out of debt. A cynic might even hypothesize that such a list would be used by promoters of alcoholic beverages, sweepstakes advertising, and gambling junkets.

Those unconcerned about privacy remind us that we live in an open society that believes that visibility in government brings accountability. With respect to individuals, a valued legacy of the 1960s is personal openness and honesty. The only people who worry about privacy are those who have something to hide. Right?

THE PREVIOUS EXAMPLES raise a variety of troubling issues: injustice, intrusion, denial of due process, absence of informed consent, deception, manipulation, errors, harassment, misuse of property, and lessened autonomy. But running through most of the examples is the central issue of privacy, as it relates to the control of personal information.

Given these examples and potential problems, it is not surprising that in 1989 half the population thought new laws were needed to protect personal privacy. Yet in a country fascinated by technology, committed to free enterprise and freedom of speech, and concerned over declining productivity, AIDS, crime, drugs, and terror, there are also contrary voices.

A response to privacy concerns, expressed by some industry spokespersons, columnists, and citizens, is simply, "So what? Why worry?" In their view, these technologies fill deeply felt needs. A host of arguments is offered to bolster their position: We increasingly live in a world of strangers, rather than in homogeneous rural communities where all residents know each other. The Supreme Court in the *Katz* decision has said that privacy was protected only when it could be reasonably expected. Technology changes and social expectations can't remain static. With more powerful technologies we can reasonably expect less and less, and hence privacy must become more restricted. After all, they say, most so-called privacy invasions are not illegal, and given the free market, one can buy technologies to prevent privacy invasion. For that matter, personal information is just a commodity, to be sold like any other. Companies have an obligation to stockholders to make money. Protecting privacy is expensive and can deter innovation.

Consumers, too, are demanding personalized and customized services. Mass marketing is inefficient, and economic viability requires the "pinpoint" or "segmented" marketing that computer analysis now makes

possible by using "point-of-sale" information. It is up to government to use whatever means it can to be more efficient and to find the guilty and protect the innocent.

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IT HAS BEEN SAID that a civilization's nature can be seen in how it treats its prisoners; it might also be seen in how it treats personal privacy.

Noting the social functions of privacy certainly is not to deny that privacy taken to an extreme can be harmful. Nor should the right to privacy infringe on other important values, such as the public's right to know and the First Amendment guarantees.

Unlimited privacy is hardly an unlimited good. It can shield irresponsible behavior — protecting child- and spouse-abusers, unsafe drivers, and money-launderers. Taken too far, it destroys community. Without appropriate limitations it can trigger backlash, as citizens engage in unregulated self-help and direct action. The private subversion of public life carries dangers, as does the public intrusion into private life.

Contemporary information-extractive technologies can, of course, protect liberty, privacy, and security. Without the incriminating tapes secretly recorded by President Nixon, Watergate would have remained a case of breaking and entering; without the Xerox machine, the Pentagon Papers might never have reached the public; and without the backup computer records kept in NSC files that Oliver North thought he had erased, we would know far less about the Iran-Contra affair. Aerial surveillance can monitor compliance with pollution standards and help verify arms-control treaties. Tiny transmitters can help locate lost children or hikers caught in an avalanche. Devices that permit firefighters to see through smoke may save lives, and remote health monitors can protect the elderly living alone (in one type, an alarm is sent if a day goes by without the refrigerator being opened).

But elements of Greek tragedy are present: the technology's unique power is also its tragic flaw. What serves can also destroy, absent increased public awareness and new public policies.

An important example of the kind of principles and policies needed is the Code of Fair Information developed in 1973 for the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The code involves five principles:

- There must be no personal-data recordkeeping whose very existence is secret.
- There must be a way for a person to find out what information about him is in a record and how it is being used.
- There must be a way for a person to prevent information about himself that was obtained for one purpose from being used or made available for other purposes without his consent.
- There must be a way for a person to correct or amend a record of identifiable information about himself.
- Any organization creating, maintaining, using, or disseminating records of identifiable personal data must assure the reliability of the data for their intended use and must take precautions to prevent misuses of the data.

These ideas might be built upon. Ways to do so include establishing a principle of *minimization*, such that only information directly relevant to the task at hand is gathered; a principle of *restoration*, such that in a communications-monopoly context, those altering the privacy status quo should bear the cost of restoring it; a *safety net* or *equity* principle, such that a minimum threshold of privacy is available to all; a principle of *timeliness*, such that data are expected to be current and information that is no longer timely should be destroyed; a principle of *joint ownership of transactional data*, such that both parties to a data-creating transaction must agree to any subsequent use of the data and must share in any gains from its sale; a principle of *consistency*, such that broad ideals rather than specific characteristics of a technology determine privacy protection; and a principle of *redress*, such that those subject to privacy invasions have adequate mechanisms for discovering and being compensated for violations.

IT IS NOT a foregone conclusion that developing technology will reduce the power of the individual relative to large organizations and the state, although the forces favoring this outcome tend to be stronger than those opposing it. Schools and religious organizations should deal more directly with the individual's rights with respect to means such as third-party records, computer dossiers, drug testing, and the polygraph. It is important that citizens react to invasions of privacy by questioning organizations, rejecting assertions such as "the computer says" or "that is the policy." Why is it the policy? What moral and legal assumptions underlie it? What alternatives are there? How were the data gathered? How are they protected and used?

It is also important that the technology be demystified and that citizens not attribute to it nonexistent powers. There is a chilling danger in the myth of surveillance, and when tech-

nologies are revealed to be less powerful than authorities claim, legitimacy declines. There should be truth in communications policies, just as we have truth in advertising and loan policies. The potentials and limits of the technology must be understood.

There are a number of steps that individuals can take to protect privacy:

• Don't give out any more information than is necessary. You are legally required to give out your social-security number in only a few instances. Don't answer questions that seem irrelevant to the issue at hand. (For example, you may refuse to give your phone number when making a credit-card purchase, or family and income information when filling out a warranty card.)

There should be truth in communications policies, just as we have truth in advertising and loan policies. The potentials and limits of the technology must be understood.

• Don't say things over a cellular or cordless phone or baby monitor that you would mind having overheard by strangers.

• Ask your bank to sign an agreement that it will not release information about your accounts to anyone lacking legal authorization. It should state that in the event of legal authorization, the bank will notify you within two days.

• Obtain copies of your credit, health, and other records and check for accuracy and currency. You are entitled to know what is in many records and, if you dispute the information, to add your version. Credit records can be obtained from TRW, Equifax, and Trans Union. Medical records can be obtained from the Medical Information Bureau (a databank maintained by 800 insurance companies), Box 105, Essex Station, Boston, MA 02112.

• If you are refused credit, a job, a loan, or an apartment, ask why. There may be a file with inaccurate, incomplete, or irrelevant information.

• If you think you are being investigated by a federal agency or believe the agency has a file on you, submit a Freedom of Information Act request asking to see the file.

• If you think your telephone is tapped or a bug is being used and you find evidence of eavesdropping equipment, contact the police and an attorney. Make use of technologies that can protect your privacy, such as an answering machine.

• Realize that when you respond to telephone or door-to-door surveys, the information will go into a databank. The only federal survey that most persons are legally obliged to answer is the U.S. Census.

• When you purchase a product or service and file a warranty card or participate in rebate or inventive programs, your name may well be sold to a mailing-list company. Ask that it not be circulated.

The Privacy Protection Act of 1974 refers primarily to actions at the federal level and tends to exclude state, local, and private-sector activities. A major failing of the Privacy Act is weak-to-nonexistent discovery and enforcement mechanisms. It is unrealistic to expect most individuals to discover violations, given the hidden and complex nature of much data collection and exchange. The means of locating violations and enforcing standards needs to be strengthened. However, the Office of Management and Budget has given this task a low priority.

The Fair Credit Reporting Act offers no recovery if a consumer is hurt by a technically accurate but misleading report. It is important that there be provision for injunctive relief for damages for persons who suffer intangible harm as a result of privacy invasion and that incentives be created that will increase compliance with the legislation we do have.

Unlike many European countries, the United States does not attempt to regulate data collection. Most protections pertain to how data are treated once they are collected. The First Amendment and concern over creating another regulatory bureaucracy partly explain this situation, but as a consequence, citizens are on their own in discovering and bringing action when their rights are violated and data collectors are given a free hand in gathering information. Given the low visibility of many violations and citizens' lack of knowledge of their rights, laws here are underenforced.

A variety of new federal, state, and local initiatives are needed. Among the promising federal legislation introduced, though not passed, as of 1990 are a bill to extend the protections of the Fair Credit Reporting Act to tenant-screening services; a bill to require a periodic audible beep on phones being monitored; a bill to extend the warrant protection of aural surveillance to video; and a bill to eliminate single-party-consent eavesdropping (a major loophole) so that all parties to a recorded conversation would have to agree.

While the Constitution has implications for privacy in a number of places (in the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments, among others), there is no explicit amendment guaranteeing privacy. States such as California

and Pennsylvania have such protections. The United States might emulate countries such as Switzerland, Sweden, Italy, and Portugal by drafting a constitutional amendment protecting privacy. The challenge is to draft it in a general enough way to protect what needs to be protected, without creating a statute whose vagueness shelters things the public interest requires to be revealed. That such a law might be largely symbolic would not detract from its significance.

With respect to information-gathering technology, we are now in the twilight zone that Justice William O. Douglas wrote about in arguing that the protection of our basic values is not self-executing:

"As nightfall does not come at once, neither does oppression. In both instances, there is a twilight when everything remains seemingly unchanged. And it is in such twilight that we all must be most aware of change in the air — however slight — lest we become unwitting victims of the darkness. One could as well argue that we are in a sunrise zone, and that we must be aware of change in the air in order to insure that we all profit from the sunshine. But for this to happen the technology must be bounded by increased public awareness, responsible corporate and government behavior, and new laws and policies." ❦

From Satori to Silicon Valley

Theodore Roszak, the man who coined the word and the idea "counterculture," has come out with an eloquently written, tightly argued little book that brings together the counterculture of the sixties with the cyberculture of the seventies and eighties. Originally delivered as the 1985 Fine Lecture at San Francisco State University, ***From Satori to Silicon Valley*** *has all the advantages of an oral presentation: not too long, not freighted with dozens of footnotes, yet offering a clear vision of what ties together the psychedelic and visionary impulses of the Haight-Ashbury and the high-tech thrust of computer culture. Anyone interested in the genesis of Bay Area visionary culture and/or computers should read this book. If you're an uncritical flagwaver for the digital revolution, be forewarned: though not as devastating as Roszak's* ***Cult of Information****, this book paints a somber picture of what became of hippie and hacker ideals as the world of international business absorbed them into its vastly older and more powerful domains. In the struggle between what Roszak calls the "reversionaries" — back to nature and the organic way, down with the military-industrial complex! — and the "technophiles" — better living through chemistry and the digital solution to world problems! — one side won and the other lost. We are living with the consequences of these victories and defeats right now, and will be for years to come.*

—Arthur Chandler

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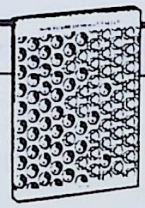
It was an attractive hope that the high technology of our society might be wrested from the grip of benighted forces and used to restore us to an idyllic natural state. And for a brief moment — while the music swelled, and the lights flashed, and the dope cast its spell — it looked like the road forward to many bright spirits. But ultimately — and really in very short order — the synthesis crumbled, and the technophiliac values of the counterculture won out. They are, after all, the values of the mainstream and the commanding heights, forces that have proved far more tenacious than most members of the counterculture guessed.



From Satori to Silicon Valley
Theodore Roszak, 1986; 60 pp.
$3.95 ($5 postpaid) from Lexikos Publishing, P. O. Box 296, Lagunitas, CA 94938; 415/488-0401
(or Whole Earth Access)

Tough Questions • Student Pugwash USA

In 1957, Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell called upon the world's scientists and citizens to "learn to think in a new way." To that end, a conference was held in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, bringing together academics and policy advisers to propose ways to curb the nuclear arms race. Student Pugwash USA (SPUSA) draws its inspiration from the Pugwash Conferences. Where the original Pugwash Conferences concentrated on nuclear weapons, SPUSA takes a broader view, providing high-school and university students and recent graduates with educational programs organized around understanding the social and ethical implications of technology. ***Tough Questions*** *is SPUSA's quarterly publication.*

—Howard Rheingold

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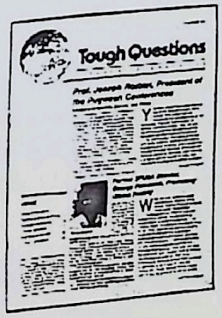
Student Pugwash USA programs address the fact that science and technology are shaping the world in increasingly profound ways. We recognize that if society is to avoid thoughtless applications of technology in the future, it is first critical to train young people to consider the implications of their decisions. Scientists and engineers should be educated about the effects their work will have on society, while policy makers should be prepared to analyze and shape the course of technology policy. Perhaps most importantly, citizens — both young and old — must feel that they have a right and a responsibility to join with experts in addressing the world's most pressing problems.



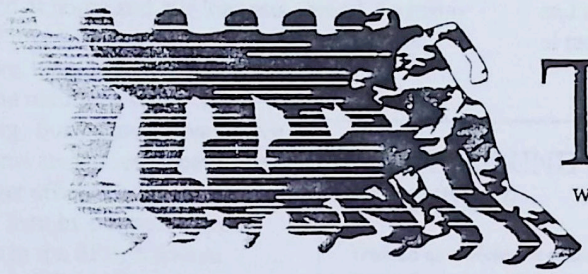
Tough Questions
Free from Student Pugwash USA, 1638 R Street NW/Suite 32, Washington, DC 20009-6446; 202/328-6555

PART SIX:

ASSUMING BLOODSHED IS TO BE AVOIDED

ARMY GREEN

BY STEWART BRAND



THE ARMS RACE is running backwards. NATO is without a mission. The few Communist governments that haven't crumbled have turned inward. In the absence of a Soviet-scale threat, present or foreseeable, what is the US Defense Department supposed to defend in the coming decades? What are we supposed to do with the prodigious instrument that won the Cold War and encored with a dazzling victory in the Gulf? That is the deeper debate these days around the Pentagon, accompanying the immediate issue of how to scale down severely and gracefully.

Meanwhile a famous global problem, the deteriorating natural environment, is gradually being re-understood in economic terms. America is finally becoming alarmed about the decay of its engineered infrastructure — highways, water systems, communications systems, and even the education system. In the same way, the whole world is worried about the *natural* infrastructure — soils, aquifers, fishable waters, forests, biodiversity, and even the atmosphere. The natural systems are priceless in value and nearly impossible to replace, but they're cheap to maintain. All you have to do is defend them.

The natural and engineered infrastructures together constitute the world's economic infrastructure — the ecostructure.

Suppose our military took on the long-term role of protecting the global ecostructure. From one point of view it did so in the Persian Gulf, defending the world's access to the major source of inexpensive energy when US direct interests in the region were relatively limited. Could we build on that success? When the global economic infrastructure is understood as including natural infrastructure, we might defend rain forests and diverse ecosystems for the same reasons we defend freedom of the seas and global communications.

An example which has scarcely been reported: tropical hardwood such as teak is a global renewable resource being criminally squandered. Environmental groups are acutely aware of the issue and acutely powerless to do anything about it in some places, such as Burma ("Myanmar," but who expects the name to last?). Would a threat of UN-sanctioned military intervention keep the vandal government of Burma from selling off its hardwood forests and its people's future livelihood? The idea seems unthinkable now. A few years from now it may seem unthinkable *not* to take action.

But seldom does environmental protection need to be that militaristic. Is there any reason to believe the military would be good at the mostly gentle role of environmental steward?

A rare federal hero of environmentalists these days is, of all things, the Army Corps of Engineers. In the last fifteen years the Army Corps has reversed its behavior, from destroying wetlands, channelizing rivers, and marching roughshod over local conservation interests, toward increasingly creating wetlands, restoring rivers, and responding to local conservation calls for help. All this from an agency that started with no environmental mandate at all.

By contrast, the recent record of federal agencies directly charged with solving serious environmental problems is more mixed. The Environmental Protection Agency's toxic-cleanup Superfund is bogged down in escalating legal costs of a scale to threaten the national economy. The National Park Service is facing its own infrastructure breakdown, having deferred maintenance on basic facilities so long that repair work often consists of "painting the rot." In

the Forest Service, programs for actively preserving public lands are constantly being proposed by staffers and just as constantly shot down in Washington for interfering with commercial interests (cattle, timber, mining) in the National Forest system.

How can that happen? It has to do with expectations. People expect *positive and immediate* results from agencies like the National Parks, Forest Service, and EPA — happy vacationers, income, cleaned-up toxic sites. No one has positive or immediate expectations of the military, only negative, long-term ones — keep war from our land at home and our interests abroad. Environmental problems are best addressed in similarly negative, long-range terms — keep the natural systems from crashing. Such slow, preventative programs are evidently better run by career officers, as in the Army Corps, than by political appointees, as in the EPA, National Parks, and Forest Service.

An element in the military's favor for an active environmental role is its experience in making radical programs work by sheer decree. Way back in 1948 President Harry Truman declared that the US military shall integrate the races in its ranks, starting now. The Pentagon took a deep breath, saluted, and complied, the first and most powerful of American institutions to integrate. A man of Colin Powell's abilities as head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was a natural result. The same occurred with giving the sexes equal opportunity in the military, a fact overlooked by the public until the Gulf War but long lauded by studious feminists such as Betty Friedan.

If there is an example of socialism that works in the world, it is the US military, capable of carrying out large, slow missions, funded by the seething market economy it protects. I saw it work during two years of active duty as an Army officer in the early '60s. You have job security, lifetime benefits, and a relatively money-free personal economy. You go where you're told and do what you're told, and you feel surprising personal freedom from the gibbering options and threats of American civilian life. You can relax and do your job, and often the job you do makes you proud.

Following the Gulf War, the US military is bursting with pride and a sense of competence to undertake any task. It prefers humanitarian tasks, such as defending Kurds or aiding Bangladesh typhoon victims. But America has a habit of forgetting its military between wars and giving it no assignments besides laying low and being ready. So the talent and the money get spent on training (with a side-benefit of public education) and on weapons systems (with a fractional side-benefit of technology transfer).

Occasionally a rogue program such as the old ARPA — Advanced Research Projects Agency — puts a few million dollars into a long-term-benefit program such as basic research in computer science in the early '60s. That single project gave America a ten- to twenty-year lead on the world in computer technology and led directly to the personal computer revolution and its associated economic boom (and also a lower-casualty victory with smart weapons in the Gulf). The perhaps lamentable fact is that the best funder of basic science in Washington is the Pentagon. Environmental science needs money — long-term, reliable, large scale money. Where could it be better spent to protect the world from war over the long run?

Military people are public servants, dedicated to the point of risking and sometimes losing their lives — it is called "the service." A frustration I remember of military life is not being called upon to actually serve the public very often; you feel a keen regret for all that ability going to waste in variations on the exercise of digging holes and filling them in. My platoon could have made short work of restoring a salmon stream, assisting a controlled forest burn, helping protect African wildlife from poachers, or planting native shrubs at the edge of a growing desert. I wonder if they might get the opportunity. ❦

BACKGROUND OF THIS PIECE

Trained as a biologist and an infantry lieutenant, I've seldom had a chance to combine those two clarifying fields. The idea for this piece came up in conversation with a staffer at the Sierra Club who was lauding recent efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers. I worked up the text last year, originally for the Global Business Network, which I co-founded with Peter Schwartz and others in 1988 (his recent book* The Art of the Long View *summarizes what GBN is up to in terms of long-term strategic planning).

Schwartz suggested I send the piece to* Time *magazine. The "Time Essay" editor was intrigued and asked to hold on to the article for a couple of months while he tried to slide it through the system. He offered a handsome kill fee if it wasn't used which didn't take me long to agree to. After a few months went by, the nice check from* Time *arrived, and I showed the piece to an editor of the* New York Times *op ed page. He liked it, suggested revisions, which I made, and he showed it to the senior editors, who said no. A similar sequence happened with the* Washington Post, *even though it was one of their random months when they like the military.

So, what the hell, I showed the piece to Howard Rheingold. He didn't have to ask anybody's permission to run it. — SB